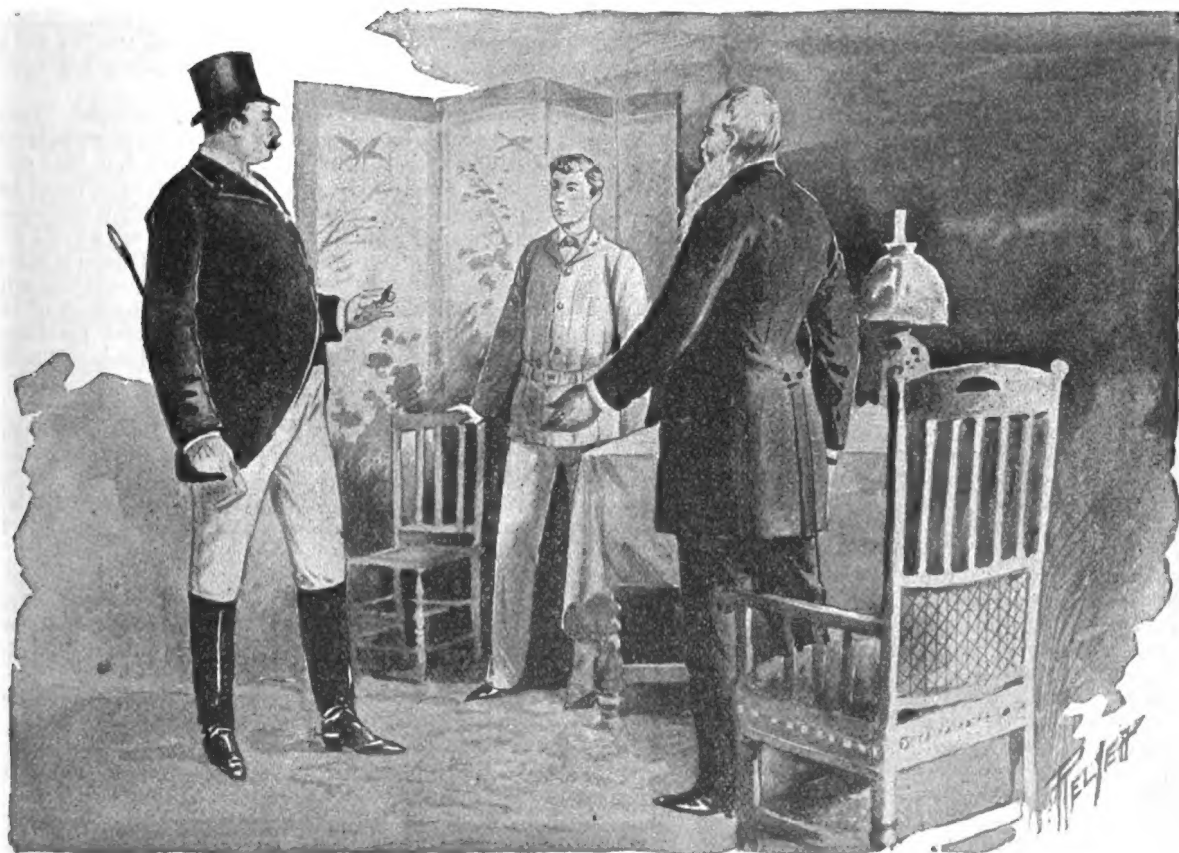


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WHOLE No. 437.



MR. IVERS TURNED AND GAVE BRAD A LONG STARE OF DISAPPROVAL.

BRAD MATTOON; OR, LIFE AT HOSMER HALL.*

BY WILLIAM D. MOFFAT.

CHAPTER IV.

BRAD MAKES AN ENEMY.

THE two boys stood facing each other for several seconds in silence. Ivers was taller than Brad, and his figure had the appearance of considerable strength. As he approached he bore a threatening aspect that might well have daunted a less courageous fellow than Brad. The

*Begun in THE ARGOSY of last week.

latter, however, showed not the slightest sign of discomposure, but took matters with a coolness of manner that served only to fan the flame of Ivers's anger to a fiercer heat.

"See here," he exclaimed, "what do you mean by using such language as you did to us down stairs?"

"What did I say?" asked Brad, as if the whole matter had passed out of his mind.

"You as much as said that we were no gentlemen," answered Ivers.

"Did I, though?" rejoined Brad. "I said that I judged gentlemen by their manners and not by their clothes. If you think that means that you were not gentlemen, then I take it there must have been something wrong with your manners."

Ivers was almost beside himself.

"Confound it, you insulted us, you young boor," he burst out vehemently, "and I mean to make you take it back——"

"Oh, you do, do you?" said Brad, stepping away from the wall.

"Yes, I do. Dr. Hope may take into the academy any sort of characters he chooses to pick up, but I don't intend to take any insolence from them. If you don't know how to keep a civil tongue in your head, I'll teach you——"

"Well, well," interrupted Brad, raising his voice somewhat, "and who are you that you can talk so freely to a stranger without allowing him the right to answer you back."

"Who am I? Who am I?" repeated Ivers, completely exasperated. "Well, it's plain you don't know. My name is Sidney Ivers, and it's my father who owns Hosmer. Do you see that fence?" and Ivers pointed through the window to a barbed wire fence that ran along some distance behind the school building. "This whole estate down to that fence belongs to my father—now you know who you are talking to." Ivers had partly forgotten his anger for a moment in his anxiety to make an impression upon Brad. As he finished speaking, he looked at the other as if he expected to find him crushed and overwhelmed. But Brad was not crushed. On the contrary, he had simply made up his mind that it was time to put a stop to this nonsense.

Stepping nearer his visitor, he said, in tones that were quiet but somewhat more earnest than before:

"So your father owns the estate, eh! Well, I'm pleased to know you are so well fixed, and I'm glad to make the acquaintance of a young gentleman of so much property. It does me honor. And now let me tell you who I am. My name is Brad Mattoon. I've traveled almost everywhere, seen almost everything except a young gentlemen's select academy, and now I've come to try a turn at one. I have no property to worry me, no money, nothing in fact except, perhaps, a half ownership in this room. I didn't understand you to say that you owned the academy and the ground it stands on, so I suppose you don't own this room. Now just let us understand one another. I don't want to quarrel—I came here to try to behave myself, and I won't make any unnecessary trouble; but let me tell you now, once for all, that if you try to bully me any more or come into this room again uninvited, I'll open that window and throw you out, and then pitch you over that fence on to the 'estate' where you belong."

All this, delivered in a cool manner that betokened no anger or resentment, almost took Ivers off his feet with surprise. He gasped, staggered back, and stared at Brad in speechless amazement for a moment. Whatever course of conduct he may have contemplated, however, must be left a matter of doubt, for, before he could recover himself, a voice was heard in the hall.

"Mr. Ivers, be so kind as to step this way. I wish to speak with you."

Both boys turned. A gentleman stood in the doorway looking at them—a gentleman of about thirty five years of age, of rather slender and delicate build, with a pale, handsome face partially concealed by a full black beard.

It was quite evident from his tone and manner that he had overheard at least a part of the conversation that had taken place. Ivers stood a moment in hesitation; then, with a hasty exclamation of annoyance, he scowled fiercely at Brad, turned on his heel and left the room. The two had hardly departed when Perry Landon came briskly in.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Well, how do you find things? Getting acquainted rapidly?"

"Yes, very fast," answered Brad dryly.

"I saw Sidney Ivers just leaving the room."

"Oh, yes; Mr. Ivers has been specially attentive," said Brad cheerfully. "He came all the way up stairs here to tell me who he was and what his father owned."

Perry burst out laughing.

"Well, what do you think of Sidney?" he asked.

"To do him full justice, I must say I think he is a coward and a bully, and as vain as a peacock."

Landon looked at Brad in surprise. "You've struck the nail square on the head that time," he said soberly; "but how did you guess his character so quickly?"

"Because he showed it to me all at once. I've a sneaking notion that he came up here really to punch my head for something I said to him down stairs, but he didn't get down to business somehow, so I've no respect for him. Nobody but a coward and bully would talk so long about what he was *going* to do, and nobody but a vain young cad would blow so much about who he was."

Brad then proceeded to relate what had happened. Perry Landon listened seriously, and with evident respect for Brad's conduct. When the latter had finished, he said:

"Well, it would have served Ivers right if you *had* pitched him out of the window, but I am sorry it happened. I know Sidney is a bully. He tried to bully me when I first came here, and I had to show him I wouldn't stand it before he stopped. I found it was bad business quarreling with him, though—not on my own account, but because of Dr. Hope. You see, Sidney goes home and tells his father everything, and then his father makes it disagreeable for Dr. Hope."

Brad was thoughtful.

"Oh, pshaw! I'm blamed sorry about that. I suppose now I've caused a mess of trouble. Who was that gentleman with Ivers in the hall?"

"That was Mr. Prentice, Dr. Hope's assistant. He is a very nice man—a hard student and a good teacher—but he is very quiet, and keeps to himself most of the time."

"He looks like an invalid," said Brad.

"He is never sick, except with nervous headaches," answered Perry. "I think sometimes he may have some trouble or other to worry him, but none of us can tell. He won't let us get well acquainted with him."

"I was noticing his voice when he spoke," said Brad.

"He seems to have a foreign accent. It sounded French."

"We have not noticed it," answered Perry, "though it is quite likely. He teaches modern languages, and may have caught the accent."

At this moment the nimble Samuel's brass buttons appeared at the door.

"Dr. Hope wants to see Mr. Mattoon in his library," said Samuel.

"Well, I suppose I'm in for it now," muttered Brad. "Oh, my! oh, my! I'm afraid I won't do for a young men's select academy at all. I'll have to go back to the 'Cinderella' again. All right," he called cheerily after Samuel's retreating form, "tell Cap'n Hope that I'll report for service in a jiffy." Scarcely noticing Perry Landon's laughter of amusement at his rough and ready address, Brad performed a hasty toilet, and proceeded down stairs to Dr. Hope's library.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

BRAD was very agreeably surprised in his interview with Dr. Hope. He had expected at the very least a severe reprimand, for he was determined that he would not vindicate himself by repeating Sidney Ivers's

words, and without doing that he saw that the circumstances appeared to be against him. Dr. Hope, however, received him very kindly.

"Well, my boy," he said, "you have made an unfortunate beginning, but, as I happened to overhear what took place in the hall previous to your going up stairs, I know that you are the least to blame. I am very sorry it happened," and here a shadow crossed the doctor's face, the significance of which Brad could guess from what Perry Landon had told him, "but I believe you conducted yourself as well as possible, under the circumstances. I would warn you, however, to be guarded in your manner toward Ivers in the future. He has a rather strong temper, and is apt to be hasty at times. I have already spoken to him very plainly as regards his share in the affair, and I do not think he will repeat it, but I must also ask you to be careful to avoid all trouble. Congenial fellowship is what we endeavor most of all to promote here. And now tell me how you left Mr. Parker. He is an old friend of mine, you know, and is one of our trustees."

And so the conversation turned to other topics, Dr. Hope leading Brad on to talk about himself, his past life, his future plans and kindred subjects, until, when the interview ended, the latter felt himself thoroughly at home; while, encouraged by the doctor's kind words of assurance, his doubts concerning himself had altogether disappeared, and he began to look forward to a season of student life with a genuine sense of pleasure.

"It will soon be lunch hour—one o'clock is our time—and you will have a chance then to see all the boys and make acquaintances," said Dr. Hope as Brad rose to go. At this moment a loud and rough voice sounded in the hall immediately outside.

"Is the doctor here? All right; never mind, I'll walk right in."

Brad had just time to note a slight change of expression on Dr. Hope's face, when the door burst open and, heralded by a column of tobacco smoke, a large gentleman in a riding suit, with heavy boots and whip, entered the room. Without removing his hat, he nodded familiarly to Dr. Hope and took his cigar from his mouth.

"Good morning, doctor," he said in a harsh, unpleasant voice. "I've come down to talk over that affair of Dick Barney's."

"Very well, Mr. Ivers," answered the doctor in his soft, gentle tones, that contrasted strangely with those of his visitor.

"Mr. Ivers, eh!" exclaimed Brad to himself; "so this is the owner of the Hosmer estate, and the father of that nice young man who wanted to fight me! Well, well, they are a pair, I guess, to judge by their looks."

"Will you be seated?" said Dr. Hope, courteously proffering a chair.

Mr. Ivers was about to take the chair, when his eyes for the first time rested upon Brad.

"Hullo! who is this?" he asked.

"Our new student, Bradley Mattoon," answered Dr. Hope, in his pleasant tones.

"Humph!" exclaimed Mr. Ivers, as he gave Brad a long stare of disapproval. "Where do you come from, young man?"

"From New York last," answered Brad.

"Bradley was introduced to us by Mr. Raymond Parker," explained Dr. Hope.

A sudden flush mantled Mr. Ivers's almost colorless face, and his cold gray eyes flashed for a moment. He bit his lip and scowled angrily at Brad.

"What! Do you come from Parker?" he exclaimed. "Any relative of his?"

"No," said Dr. Hope before Brad could answer. "Mr. Parker is an old friend of Bradley's, and learning that we had a vacancy here, he sent him out to me with a letter of introduction. I think Bradley will do very well——"

"Haven't you a list of preferred names to select from to fill your vacancy?" interrupted Mr. Ivers.

"Oh, of course," answered Dr. Hope somewhat more firmly, "but I used my own judgment in preferring Bradley. I considered Mr. Parker's recommendation the best ground for preference."

"Humph! Well, Raymond Parker's is not the sort of recommendation I care for—still, that is not what I came to talk about. Let us get to business," and Mr. Ivers seated himself. Brad immediately seized this opportunity to slip out.

"Phew!" he said to himself when at a safe distance from the library, "what sort of a place have I struck anyhow? I seem to run up against trouble wherever I turn. Young Ivers was bad enough, but the old one seems, if anything, a bit worse—for all the world like a malignant old spider, and I suppose the estate is his web. Well, I hope Dr. Hope isn't in it, that's all—small show for him if he is."

At lunch Brad found himself seated beside Perry Landon at one of four tables that comfortably filled the bright, sunny dining room. He was then for the first time afforded an opportunity of studying the faces of his various fellow students. The three other boys besides Perry Landon and himself who sat at his table impressed him very agreeably. They nodded pleasantly to him when he seated himself, and by their manner and conversation set him at ease almost immediately. One of them specially interested Brad—a small, slender, pale faced boy with spectacles, who looked about in a timid sort of way and seemed to be frightened when anybody spoke to him. He spoke seldom himself, and when he did it was in a meek little voice, scarcely audible above the hum of general conversation.

"Oh, that's Rob Wilton," whispered Perry Landon in answer to Brad's inquiry. "We call him the 'little dominie.' He is the son of a missionary and came here from India, where he was brought up. He is a little soft, and entirely too goody goody, I'm afraid, for this place. We can't help laughing at him sometimes, though it is a perfect shame the way some of the fellows bully him, for he is a nice little chap in his way."

From a general glance around the room Brad rightly inferred that the boys represented excellent families, and, for the most part, families of wealth. This latter seemed most evident in the case of the four young men seated at the next table to Brad's. One of these Brad readily recognized as Brayton Arkell. The others were evidently particular friends of his.

"Who are those fellows?" asked Brad.

"They are the swell set," answered Perry with a slightly sarcastic accent. "For some reason unknown to any one but themselves they think they are a little above the rest of us, so they hang together usually. We call them the 'upper four,' though there are really five, for Sidney Ivers goes with them all the time."

"Are they all like him?" asked Brad, fearing that his list of acquaintances would become very limited.

"Oh, no. They are all right. We don't mind their little airs. Clarence Bliss and Arthur Paton, the two sitting opposite Arkell, are good enough in their way, while Eugene Clifford is about the most influential fellow here. He leads in nearly everything. He is a smart student, the best all-round athlete in the academy, and has any number of small

accomplishments. He is very quick at learning anything, and does everything with a dash that is simply fascinating. You can see for yourself that he has plenty of good looks."

Brad watched Eugene Clifford throughout lunch with growing interest, and could not help admiring his strong, well built figure and handsome face. Brad was a close and accurate observer of human nature, however, and could detect in Clifford's manner a certain amount of self consciousness.

"Well, he *is* a fine looking fellow," reflected Brad, "but I don't believe any one admires him any more than he does himself. Still, I can't blame him when he has so much to be proud of."

While Brad was gathering impressions concerning the other boys, they were forming an estimate of him, and the general decision was strongly in his favor.

"I think he is one of the most interesting fellows I ever met," said Fred Dawson, one of the most thorough and faithful students in the academy, when discussing Brad with a group of boys on the following afternoon. "What he hasn't seen of the world isn't worth mentioning. I got more points of information from a short talk I had with him this morning than I have learned in a month. He seems to have been everywhere, and yet he is as modest as can be in talking about what he knows. I had to draw him out with questions, but once started, he told me enough to fill a book."

"Well, if he knows so much," said Clarence Bliss with a short laugh, "why don't he know enough to dress well? He looks like a hired man in that corduroy suit."

"I admit it isn't swell," answered Fred, "but it probably suited him for his purposes before he came here, and, who knows, perhaps he can't afford another suit at present. That is nothing to his discredit."

"Then, for the sake of the academy, let us by all means take up a collection and get him one," remarked Arthur Paton.

"I don't care anything about his clothes," exclaimed one of the other boys. "Mattoon is one of the best natured fellows I ever met, and I like him through and through. If there is to be any such a contribution," he added with a laugh, "it ought to come entirely from the *upper four*, as they set the fashions here."

But it was not the expense that deterred Brad from purchasing a new suit. When on the following morning Perry Landon, who had rapidly become well acquainted with Brad, and knew his circumstances well enough to feel confident of giving no offense, jokingly remarked that the *upper four* contemplated a contribution to obtain another rig, Brad burst into a hearty laugh.

"Well, they had better not waste their ducats," he said. "They have insulted my precious old corduroy, and I intend to rub it into them by wearing it all the term. It is my little joke; besides, I have stood so much on account of the suit that I have grown fond of it, and can't give it up. Just present the *upper four* with my compliments, and tell them that if they can't stand my corduroy they must cut me dead except on Sundays, when I wear my best suit." And that was all the satisfaction Brad afforded them.

CHAPTER VI.

BRAD HAS AN ADVENTURE.

IT was on a Wednesday morning when the academy opened, and the ensuing days of the week were chiefly preparatory, as far as studies were concerned, so that the boys had considerable leisure and opportunity to judge of their new companion. After the disagreeable encounters

with Brayton Arkell and Sidney Ivers, everything went very smoothly for a few days. Brad's cheery good humor and easy offhand manner won him an immediate popularity with the majority of the boys that was extremely gratifying to him. From Ivers and Arkell he expected no courtesy, and received none, while the remainder of the "upper four" had as yet paid little attention to him.

Saturday was a half holiday at Hosmer, and as the first Saturday of the term proved to be a beautiful day, the boys scattered far and wide over the neighborhood in the various pursuits of walking, hunting and skating. Perry Landon proposed the latter to Brad.

"I can't," he answered. "I have no skates with me. I left my pair packed up in my big box at the warehouse in New York, but I'll walk over to the lake and see *you* skate."

Once at the lake Perry Landon offered Brad his skates for a time, but as they were of the older style and required plates in the heels, Brad could not take advantage of his offer.

"Never mind," he said. "You go on and have your sport. I'll watch you a while, and then I'll run home and finish a letter I have on hand. Who are those fellows?" he added, pointing toward a group of three some distance up the lake, one of whom was curveting around gracefully on one foot.

"Why, that is Eugene Clifford, Clarence Bliss, and some one else."

"Is that Clifford doing the fancy work? He makes a pretty one foot '8'."

"Yes," answered Perry Landon; "no one around here can skate that way except Eugene. He is a crack ice sprinter and long distance racer, as well as fancy skater. The town has exhibition races for prizes nearly every winter out here on the lake, and the last two seasons Eugene has come out away ahead. He is probably practicing now for this year's contest. Come on up with me and watch him for a while."

Brad followed Perry up the lake and stood looking on for some time, while Eugene Clifford, not at all reluctant to display his skill before a new admirer, passed in succession through a series of brilliant and intricate figures. Brad stood by and watched him with interest, nodding appreciatively from time to time, but saying nothing. At last, as he felt his feet growing numb, and the early evening began to draw near, he turned back and warmed himself by running home.

He went first into the reading room opposite the library, where he completed a letter to Mr. Parker which he had begun in the morning. He was occupied some time with this, and when he placed it in the mail box he found there remained but a few minutes before dinner; so he hastened up stairs to make preparations. Perry Landon, who had returned from the lake, was standing before the bureau.

"Here is a note for you," he said, as Brad entered the room. "I found it on the pincushion when I came in."

Brad tore open the envelope and read as follows:

I wish to see you tonight on a matter of importance. You will please meet me at my office in the school building at 11 o'clock. I will return on the 10:30 train, and will be there at that time.

RICHARD HOPE.

"Why, what under the sun does it mean?" asked Brad in astonishment, as he read the note to Perry. "What should Dr. Hope want to see me at that hour for?"

Perry shook his head in silence.

"Perhaps it is a hoax of some kind," suggested Brad.

Perry took the note and examined it.

"No chance of that," he said. "It is Dr. Hope's handwriting—that is unmistakable."

Still puzzling over the matter, Brad started down toward the dining room. On the stairs he met Mrs. Hollis.

"Is Dr. Hope away?" he asked.

"Yes," was the answer. "He left this morning for New York. He said he would be back this evening, sure."

Brad thought he detected light immediately.

"I have it," he said to Perry, as they passed on. "Dr. Hope, of course, intended seeing Mr. Parker in New York, and he has, no doubt, some business matter that he wants to talk to me about. The only thing I can't understand is why he should have to see me late tonight. Still, of course he knows best about that."

The school building was situated about one hundred yards back of the Hall, and was connected with the latter by a board walk, which was completely protected and inclosed by a long wooden shed, in order that the students could readily pass from one building to the other in all kinds of weather without wrapping up.

At the Hall end the shed joined the door of the lavatory, or large washroom, which was filled with stationary washstands and numbered lockers, in which the boys kept balls, bats, rackets and other sporting materials. At the school house end the shed opened upon the large piazza that skirted the front of the building. In this structure Dr. Hope had an office, where he was often at work at night, so that it was no special cause of surprise to Bradley that he should be summoned there.

It was close upon eleven o'clock, and Perry Landon was in bed and asleep when Brad, who had spent the evening quietly reading, rose to go down to the school building. Remembering that the night was cold, he put on his hat before leaving his room, and then, turning down the gas, he stepped into the hallway. Everything was quiet about him. The boys had all retired, and the lights, with the exception of a small gas jet at the head of the stairs, had all been extinguished. He was making in that direction when it occurred to him that he could avoid passing the other rooms and the chance of disturbing the sleeping inmates, as well as reach his destination more readily, by going down the back stairs, which led directly into the lavatory.

Brad therefore changed his course, and, making the least possible noise, he walked to the rear of the hall and descended the back stairs. After passing down the two narrow winding flights, he found himself at the lower door. Groping around in the dark for a few moments, he found the knob, and, opening the door very softly, stepped down into the lavatory. A low fire was burning in the large stove which stood in the center of the room, and, by the dim light it shed, Brad made his way to the outer door, which opened upon the shed passageway. This he found fastened, but the bolts were easily slid back, and a few seconds sufficed to open the door. A cold chill from the passageway struck him, and Brad instinctively shrunk back and buttoned up his coat more tightly before venturing out. At this moment a strange and unexpected sound arrested him. Holding his breath, he inclined his head forward and listened attentively. First came a gentle clink, clink, clink! then the noise of a sliding drawer, and then that curious clink again. Brad was unable at first to make out from what direction the sounds came, but in a few seconds the matter was solved by a sudden flash of light that shot across the ground glass window between the lavatory and the pantry adjoining. The light came from the interior of the pantry, and flashed fitfully to and fro.

On seeing this, Brad at once experienced a sense of relief. "It is probably one of the servants clearing up things, or putting the silver away," he said to himself. It seemed a

very late hour, however, for such a proceeding; so Brad, in order to assure himself, tiptoed cautiously forward, and slowly raising the lower sash of the ground glass window an inch or two, stooped down and peered through.

Involuntarily a gasp of amazement escaped him at the sight that met his eyes.

(To be continued.)

A SHOP ON WHEELS.*

BY WALTER F. BRUNS.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CAPTURE.

THE heavy reports of the guns echoing through the house, and the rapid shooting without, drowned what noise he would make, besides keeping the occupants busy; and selecting a suitable position, he began operations.

He worked unceasingly for the greater part of an hour, and then crawled cautiously back, panting and nearly exhausted.

"That is hard work," he said, "and that pick is awful clumsy to work with. I have got one rock very near out."

"Let me try," said Chub; and Hart not replying, he dropped to the ground and began to do as Hart had done.

During all this time the firing had not ceased, and from the number of shots one would think a sham battle was in progress.

Chub found that Hart had centered his work upon one good sized rock, from which the mortar had been carefully chipped away. He inserted the point of the pick in the crevice, and throwing some of his hundred and seventy five pounds of humanity on the handle, was rewarded with a crunching noise and found himself flat on his back, while the stone rolled over the ground.

"Careful, there," he heard Hart say sharply.

Now that he had more of a show with the pick, the next stone left its long resting place in rather an unceremonious manner. In no more time than was consumed by Hart, an opening was made large enough to admit the passage of a large man.

Chub took one look in at the Egyptian darkness, a hasty sniff at the peculiar odor coming through the opening, and scrambled back to where Hart and the two men were standing in the darkness.

"It is finished," he said simply.

"All right," returned Hart quickly. "Murphy!"

A man came up, indistinguishable in the dark but for the bandages around his throat.

"Take three men and watch the outside. We are going in. They may make a break to get away, but don't let any escape."

"I won't," replied Murphy grimly. "I owe 'em something for this cut in my neck."

When Murphy and his three men were posted, Hart gathered the remaining three around him and said:

"I will take the lead. Come one at a time, and wait until the one ahead of you is through before you start. See that your weapons are properly loaded. Are you going, young man?"

"Yes, sir," replied Chub.

"Here is a pistol. Now we number five. They are still one ahead, but that one is a woman. Are you ready?"

"All ready," was the low response, and dropping on his hands and knees, Hart crawled rapidly toward the hole in the foundation.

*Began in No. 428 of THE ARGOSY.

He vanished from view before he reached it, but after waiting until it was reasonably expected he had entered, the next man followed.

And one by one they left him, until Chub stood alone, and then when the time arrived for him to follow, he did so, but not without some apprehension.

"Here I go," he told himself with an inward groan. "If some one catches sight of me, there is no one to drive them back from the window. It's hit or miss. If there is any shooting done inside, I will probably stop all the bullets. But it's too late to show the white feather now, even if I wanted to."

And Chub felt relieved when he reached the hole, although the most dangerous part of the mission was yet to be faced.

He went through feet first. Some one guided his feet to the top of a barrel, and when he descended he found himself among the men.

"Use your dark lantern, Broadwell," Hart was saying. And then he flashed his own about the cellar.

Chub caught sight of a row of barrels and a furnace with a big copper kettle, when the light went out, Hart saying:

"There is a pair of stairs here leading to the rear rooms, but how are we to catch those in front unawares?"

"There must be some way of getting up in front," chimed in Chub; "for when we knocked over the chair they sent Bill up to see what it was, and he stepped out of what we took to be a bedroom just in time for me to run into him."

"That is so," exclaimed Hart. "You go with Broadwell and this man and capture those in front, while Brady and I take those in the rear. Try and gauge the time so we will act at the same moment."

"Come on," said Broadwell, allowing a small ray of light to escape from his lantern, enough to faintly light their way. "Be careful to make no noise."

In the far end of the cellar a ladder was found, ascending which, and passing through a hole sawed in the floor, they found themselves in the room the boys had concluded was a bedroom.

It was empty, with the exception of a single chair, and after waiting until he was satisfied Hart and Brady were in a position to act, Broadwell gave the order to move.

The door was opened softly, and following Chub's directions, they turned to the left. Broadwell peered around the casing of the door to the front room, but being unable to see anything, he pulled the slide of his lantern, at the same time singing out:

"Hands up! Mind you, don't try to raise a weapon or you are dead men!"

Almost at the same moment Hart's sharp voice could be heard in the rear.

And what a picture in the front room! The bright rays of the dark lantern threw those behind into more dense darkness, so, had the occupants of the room been able to look, they could not have told how many there were.

Roper, Foxy and Dillon each crouched by a window with a gun, with nothing below their eyes above the sill, watching for a chance to shoot. So unexpected and complete was the surprise, that neither dared to move, and they retained the position until Broadwell said sharply:

"Stand up! Keep your hands off those guns and above your head."

Foxy stood up sullenly, with hands uplifted, and the deputy stepped forward, slipped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, and then searched him for dangerous weapons.

Roper and Dillon were performed on in the same way, and then Broadwell turned the light over to the deputy, and said hurriedly:

"Keep your eye on 'em till I go back an' see if Hart wants any help. For all we know the tables may be turned."

But they weren't, as Broadwell saw at a glance the moment he entered the kitchen. Bill, Dinny and Moll stood looking at the handcuffs on their wrists, as though the fight had been suddenly warped out of them, leaving them with stooped shoulders and dejected mien.

The house was in a deplorable condition. There was not a whole pane of glass on the lower floor. Bullets had knocked the plaster from the walls in large patches, scarred and splintered the furniture, and from the number and ranges it seemed wonderful none were hit.

All the prisoners were placed in the front room, with four men to guard them. Three dark lanterns illuminated the scene.

"We want to get through with this business as soon as possible," said Hart. "Ride back to town, Brady, and stop those extra men and provisions the two boys ordered. We would probably have had use for them but for this chap."

And as Brady hurried from the house Mr. Hart began a tour of exploration, accompanied by Broadwell, Chub and another deputy. When they gained the cellar they reached the interesting point.

When the dark lanterns were flashed about, Chub saw a row of barrels and a large tank on one side. A pile of barrel staves and wood was scattered about near the furnace, and in the forward end of the cellar one corner had a cement floor. As Mr. Hart had surmised, a spring ran through the cellar, kept within bounds by a cement trough.

"They had things fixed very nice," said Hart, after the examination was over. "Plenty of water handy, without having to carry it at night and run the risk of exciting suspicion. The cement floor in that corner was used as a drying room for malt, I suppose."

"Just so," acquiesced Broadwell. "They must have been running for a good time, for there is a good many of them barrels full of spirits."

"Spirits! Malt and spirits!" repeated Chub. "What kind of a place is this?"

"Why, don't you know?" asked Hart, in surprise.

"I'm beginning to get a hazy idea," replied Chub.

"Well, I'll help you out," returned Hart, laughing. "It is an illicit distillery, and about as snug a still as I've seen for some time!"

But, as the information had come so gradually, Chub was not so surprised as he would have thought.

When they returned to the front room, Chub stepped in the light for the first time, and almost instantly Foxy cried:

"Oh, it is you we have to thank for this?"

"Why, hello, Foxy," cried Chub cordially, as though he had not seen him before.

"Hello, yourself, an' see if it makes you healthy!" retorted Foxy.

"I told you those chaps would blow," complained Roper; "but Bill knew a whole lot an' wouldn't listen to me. Thought they was too skeared an' glad to git away to do anythin'. If I'd had my way I'd follered 'em till I caught 'em or put a bullet into them!"

"You are all right," said Chub, cheerfully. "I like to see everything placed where it belongs."

"You won't be all right if I ever git a chance at you," said Roper angrily. "I—"

"That will do!" interrupted Hart, sharply. "Don't plan too far ahead, for you are not likely to be able to harm anybody for the next ten or fifteen years."

Roper was not pleased in the least with this sweet consolation, but he dared say no more, and sat throwing ferocious

glances about with his one eye, to which no one paid any attention.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MASON AGAIN.

TWO deputies were left to guard the house, and after securing the boys' guns, the rest started back to town with the prisoners. Moll was allowed a horse, but the others tramped along through the mud, vowing vengeance on all concerned and the boys in particular.

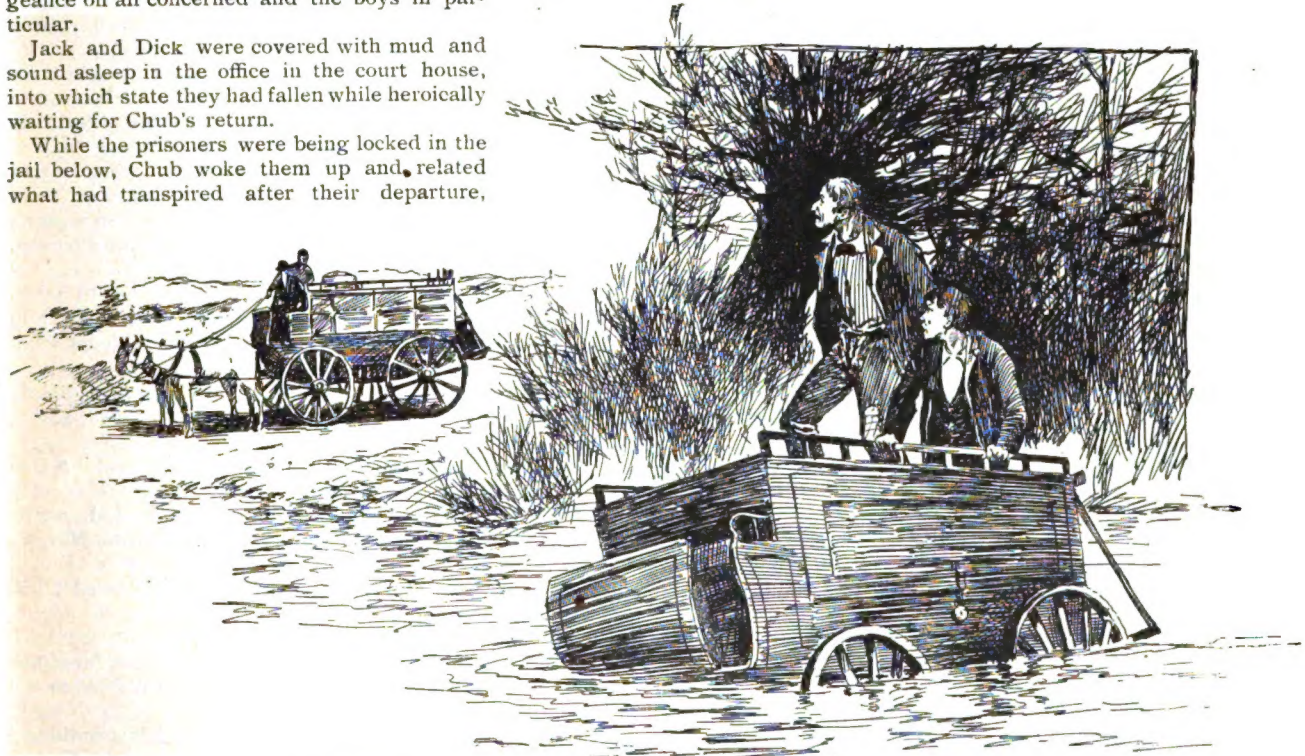
Jack and Dick were covered with mud and sound asleep in the office in the court house, into which state they had fallen while heroically waiting for Chub's return.

While the prisoners were being locked in the jail below, Chub woke them up and related what had transpired after their departure,

"Then we'd better deposit it, subject to draft, and draw it when we get home," Dick advised.

And as this suggestion was acted upon, and as the bank transacted no business until after nine o'clock, it was half an hour after that before they started.

The roads were heavy and progress slow. The farmers seemed to be well supplied with the lines the boys carried, and Chub, growing suspicious, propounded a few questions that revealed the fact that Mason was ahead, and not far ahead at that.



ANDY AND HIS FATHER WERE ON TOP, THEIR FACES PALE AS A SHEET.

He had scarcely finished when Hart came in, travel stained and jubilant.

"Come around in the morning, boys, and we can straighten up what business remains to be done, and you can get your reward."

"Our reward!" repeated Chub.

"Say!" exclaimed Jack excitedly. "Does that reward on the bulletin board in the hall have any reference to this case?"

"Any reference!" returned Hart. "Of course it has. It is the same one!"

"Whoop-ee!" shouted Jack.

And when the three started for a hotel, Dick was so excited he could scarcely say:

"It has been a good day's work, boys, but we are well paid. I never dreamed when Jack and I read that over that it was anything that concerned us. Five hundred dollars reward! Whew! I don't know whether I am walking or not!"

The next morning, after what legal business remained to be transacted was over, the boys' names and addresses were written down and the five hundred dollars turned over.

"We have more money now than I care to have about," Chub said uneasily, after the excitement had died away.

"Now, we are not riding through the country on a pleasure trip," Chub told the others, after receiving this information; "and there is no profit when we sell nothing. The one ahead has all the sales, and as Mason is not in the least particular what way he takes to get the advantage of us, suppose we change places with him."

"Supposing we do, don't put us there," Dick reminded him; "and these roads are not in a favorable condition for racing."

"I'll admit that," said Chub; "but our horses are better than his, and if we don't waste any time stopping at these farmhouses where we don't sell anything, we will gradually gain on him, and not wear the horses out, either."

And following his idea they kept steadily on, and the stops Mason made lessened the distance wonderfully.

They came in sight of his wagon, after rounding a turn in the road, standing before a farmhouse not far ahead. Mason was at the door with a display of tinware, and when the boys went past with a shout and flying mud, he ran half way to the gate in his excitement, as though intending to stop them.

That he was angry the boys could see by looking back. He walked back to the door, jammed his tinware together, and leaving the lady staring at him in astonish-

ment, threw them in the wagon, and started his horses at a lope, which, however, they soon stopped in spite of his urging.

But this running competition benefited neither party, as the boys soon found. If they stopped to make a sale, Mason was liable to pass them, and after four miles had been covered, Dick said :

"We are making no more now than before. I am going to run the risk of his passing and stopping at the next house."

And he did so.

The household was very slow to purchase. Dick was in the midst of an elaborate description of his goods, when a warning shout came from the wagon, and, catching up the goods, he unceremoniously decamped ; but before he reached the gate Mason went by with the laugh of a deep, double dyed villain.

"I would like to know what we gained by that changing about?" demanded Dick, hastily returning the articles to the wagon and clambering up to the seat.

"Time," replied Chub laconically.

"Yes, and that is about all," went on Dick. "Drive a little faster and catch up with him. Perhaps we can come to an understanding."

"I doubt it," said Jack,

Mason looked back at the sound of their approach, and started to whip his horses, when Dick called :

"Don't be in a hurry. We are not going to pass you, I give you my word."

"No, I reckon not," replied Mason sarcastically, showing by his tone that he did not believe them. "What do you fellers mean, doggin' me around the country?"

"Dogging you!" repeated Chub indignantly. "Better ask yourself that question, sir! That was a very shabby trick you tried back in Illinois."

Mr. Mason grinned.

"And you are liable to get into trouble about it yet," continued Chub.

The grin vanished.

"How'd you know I had anythin' to do with stealin' your wagon?" he demanded in a blustering tone.

"Now, who said anything about stealing our wagon?" cried Dick. "He may have meant those horrible prevarications you told about us. As for the stealing of the wagon, Foxy said that you gave them five dollars as an inducement."

Mr. Mason's jaw dropped. Then he pretended to get awfully angry, and declared :

"If I can't sell nothing, I'll see that you don't!"

"You can certainly act reasonable," said Dick sharply.

"There are enough customers on this road for both of us. You can take one side of the road or the other, or every other house ; just as you like."

"I'll have the whole hog or none," retorted Mason.

"All I can say for you," cried Chub angrily, "is that you are the most contemptible man I——"

"Never mind, Chub," cried Dick quietly. Then to Mason he continued : "If you can afford to drive over the country without making any sales we can. I am afraid if you stick to that resolution to have the whole hog or none, you will get none."

"You think so, do you?" returned Mason, in exasperating fashion.

Then the horses plodded along, both parties stubbornly holding their positions. Mason gazed wistfully at the houses they passed, but made no attempt to stop, and the boys, feeling that their fair proposition was rejected, kept their horses'

noses at the back of his wagon, and had no twinges of conscience either.

CHAPTER XXVIII

GOOD BY TO JACK.

THE distance between the peddling wagons and the Pacific coast was gradually lessened. At night Mason and the boys stopped at the same farmhouse, and all the evening Mason and Andy held proudly aloof.

He was up at an early hour and oiled his wagon. The boys were watching for him to give them the slip, but he did not, and in the same position they occupied the previous day, they drove away from the farmhouse.

They had gone perhaps a mile when Mason looked back with a satisfied grin, and said :

"I'm goin' to trot up now. Moberly ain't far ahead. If you've got anything to tell them I'll carry the news."

"Very obliging in you," returned Chub. "You might tell them to look for us ten minutes before you arrive."

Mr. Mason scratched his head in perplexity ; then bestowing a very amiable grin on the boys, chirruped to his horses, and then drove on at a trot.

"Our horses can stand as much as his," said Dick, promptly keeping pace. "Something seems to tickle him almighty, for look at him look back and grin. Wonder what it is?"

As if to reply to Dick's question, the wagon suddenly gave a lurch, the rear dropped solidly in the road, and it stopped, the horses unable to draw it.

"Great Christopher!" cried Chub, jumping down. "One of the wheels has run off!"

"That's queer," said Jack, following suit and, as he landed in the road, immoderate laughter arose from Mason's wagon.

"I'll bet this is what Mason was looking for," cried Dick. "Where is the nut?"

"Yes, where is the nut?" echoed Chub.

The boys searched along the road for a distance it seemed impossible the wagon could have run without it, but no nut was found, and they returned to the team.

"There is nothing gained sitting here doing nothing," said Dick. "If Mason was not so far away, I believe I could say a few words to him that would please him mightily."

"There is a farmhouse not far up the road there," added Chub. "Suppose one of you go up there and see if you can't buy or borrow a nut that will fit, while the other two get the wheel on."

"I'll go," volunteered Jack, and he started up the road.

Chub and Dick, with the aid of a fence rail, lifted the axle and slipped the wheel on, and then sat down to wait for Jack.

"It takes him an awful long time," Chub remarked at length. "I'll walk up that way and see what is keeping him."

And when he approached the house he saw an excited throng on the front porch, in the center of which was Jack, shaking hands with everybody.

"Great Scott!" thought Chub. "I wonder what is going to happen next."

And as he paused to survey the scene Jack caught sight of him, and called for him to come in. Not a little mystified, Chub complied.

"I'm both glad and sorry," Jack began. "Glad to have found my relations, and sorry to have to part with you. Mr. Matthews, this is my uncle, Mr. Walters, and this is——"

And so on through the whole family ; and Chub was so

thunderstruck he almost forgot to recognize the introductions. But he regained control of himself in time, and then recollected that Jack had told them when they first met that his uncle lived near Moberly.

Jack had finished his story before he happened to remember what he had come after, and Mr. Walters hunted up an extra nut and gave it to them. All this time Dick had been patiently waiting, and had about concluded he would have to go after the other two, when Chub appeared.

Mr. Walters was so taken with the boys, and so jubilant that nothing would do but that they should remain and have dinner, which, of course, they consented to do.

He was so genial and kind hearted that the boys did not hesitate in declaring that Jack had found a good home, and they were glad for the latter's sake, although they were going to miss him keenly.

After the goodbys were exchanged, they drove for quite a time before Dick mustered up courage enough to say:

"It is going to be awful lonesome without Jack. I'm almost mean enough to wish he had not found his relatives."

"So'm I," responded Chub briefly. "Seems like we'd known him all our life. I didn't think his leaving would break me up this way."

And then they relapsed into silence.

The amount of the sales fluctuated, as the boys were fortunate enough to get ahead of Mason or unfortunate enough to let him pass them, and but for the excitement derived from these contests the monotonous life would have been unbearable.

And then the day came, bright and cheery, that saw them homeward bound, and the boys were quite elated until they learned that shrewd Mason was again ahead.

"Have we got to have him in the lead all the way home?" Dick demanded petulantly.

But Chub could not answer the question, and for three days the positions remained unchanged, and then something happened that settled all anxiety on that score.

They were driving along a winding road when a storm suddenly arose, and before they could reach shelter it came down with a violence that forced them to draw off to the side until it was over.

When this time arrived, and they resumed their journey, they had traveled but a short distance when a cry sounded on the damp air.

"What was that?" asked Chub.

And then it came with remarkable distinctness:

"Help! help!"

"Somebody in trouble," cried Dick, urging the horses on until they were covered with flying mud.

They turned a curve, and now that their view was not obstructed by timber, they saw the cause. Directly ahead, the road forded a creek of considerable size, which was swollen by the rain into a small, muddy river. Standing in the center, and a little below the ford, where the waters had washed it, stood Mason's wagon. With Andy's help he had succeeded in cutting the traces and saving the horses, which stood looking at him from the opposite bank; but now that there was nothing to hold it, the wagon was being driven down stream.

The water was nearly to the top, and parted around it with a sullen, rushing sound and plenty of foam. The wagon would be driven several feet, and then, meeting an obstruction, would stop until the hindrance was carried away.

It had careened somewhat, and standing on the top was Andy and his father, their faces pale as a sheet. Logs and driftwood were coming down, and if they lodged across the

wagon it would be over in a twinkling; and if Andy and his father managed to get out of the drift they would be lucky. To say the least, the position was a ticklish one.

(To be concluded.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

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T. B. McC., Philadelphia, Pa. You must make your notice more definite before we can insert it.

I-6-4-L-E. You will find a swimming school in 45th St., just east of Fifth Ave., New York.

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C. S. W., Petrosky, Mich. For information relative to the organization of the Y. M. C. A., address Secretary of Y. M. C. A., 23d St. and 4th Ave., New York.

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G. W. C., Troy, N. Y. The leading paper in Helena, Montana, is the *Herald*; in Butte City, Montana, the *Inter-Mountain*; in Houston, Texas, the *Post*; in Tucson, Arizona, the *Citizen* and *Star*. The "Newspaper Directory" has no record of Buena Vista, Va.

J. H. M., Grayson, Ky., and A. READER, Kan. A series of articles on amateur photography was published in THE ARGOSY, Nos. 313 to 323 inclusive, but exclusive of 314; one on photographing wild game in No. 339, and another on flash light photography in No. 359. Price of each of the above issues, ten cents.

R. W., New York City. 1. The average chest measurement of a boy of fourteen is 26 inches without expansion; 27 1-4 inches expanded. 2. You will have to apply to the United States Book Company, at New York, for information relative to the publication of "Van." 4. We published a serial by Harry Castlemon in Vol. I of THE ARGOSY.

AN ADMIRER OF THE ARGOSY, Port Jervis, N. Y. 1. To obtain the liquid form of India ink from the stick, dissolve it in water. Why not purchase it as a liquid in the first place, however? 2. The best kind of paper for pen and ink sketches is that called wedding Bristol board. 3. Numbers 303, 404 and 170 of Gillott's pens are the kind generally used for this work. 4. A half reduction is usually given THE ARGOSY drawings—that is, a sketch intended for column width is drawn twice as wide and proportionately high. 5. The length of time required to make a drawing depends entirely on the character and size of the picture. Some are done in a day; others require a much longer time.



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Remember that our great premium offer, full details of which were printed on second cover page of Nos. 434, 435 and 436, only holds good till May 1. Also that to stand a chance of winning any of the prizes, you must have secured at least fifty readers. But even should you not gain a prize, the 25 cents you will earn on each name will net you \$12.50 for the fifty.

* * * *

WOULD you make money in literature? Then devote yourself with the most assiduous care to some other pursuit, such as acting, soldiering, exploring or politics, rise to eminence in it, and then, as you grow old, publishers will bow down before you and give you almost any sum you may demand in exchange for your "reminiscences." At least, this is the deduction we draw from the tendency of the times.

Edwin Booth has just refused \$25,000 for his memoirs, declaring that he detests writing, and that five times the sum named would not induce him to put pen to paper to tell the story of his life. Think of this, ye thousands of industrious scribes, who would gladly push the pencil or click the type-writer keys all day long and half into the night if you were sure of your work seeing the light of print, leaving the matter of compensation entirely out of the question!

Verily, indeed, as Hamlet declares, "the times are out of joint" when non-literary men are implored to write and won't, and those who make a business of it barely manage to eke out a subsistence, and sometimes fail at even that.

WILLIAM MORRIS STEWART.

FROM SCHOOL ROOM TO SENATE.

UNDER the great dome of the United States capitol there assembles a body of men whose rise into prominence is a constant reminder of the glorious opportunities open to all in the land of liberty.

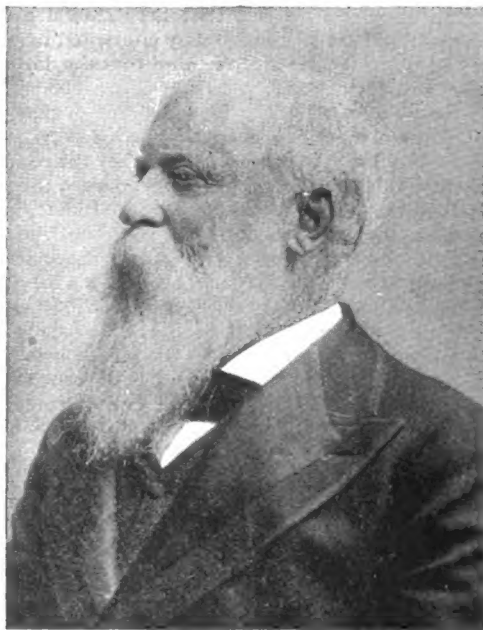
William Morris Stewart is an example of one who began low in life, and finally rose to become one of the nation's legislators. From the position of a teacher in a common country school, he worked his way up to one of the highest offices in the gift of the American people.

It was in the little town of Lyons, in Wayne County, New York, on the ninth day of August, sixty four years ago, that Senator Stewart was born. While he was still a small child, his parents moved from the Empire to the Buckeye State. In Mesopotamia Township, Turnbull County, Ohio, the future statesman spent his boyhood.

The Lyons Union School opened its doors to young Stewart before he was twenty, and while yet a pupil he was appointed a teacher of mathematics in the institution. This training developed within him those qualities which are so essential to success in life—good executive ability, common sense, and power of reasoning. From the Union school he went to the Farmington Academy to still further increase his store of learning. He had one idea uppermost in his mind at that time, and that was to enter college. Not having a fortune at command, he industriously set to work to earn the money with which to pay for the

higher education he sought; and, taking his earnings derived from teaching, he was finally enabled to enter Yale College. The helping hand of James C. Smith, one of the judges of the Supreme Court of New York, was generously stretched out to the ambitious young man, and with this friendly assistance he remained at Yale till the winter of 1849-'50.

Then a sudden wave of excitement swept over the country. It was the announcement that gold had been discovered in California, which event, following so closely on the heels of the Mexican War, threw the nation into a fever of speculation. Stories that fortunes were being



WILLIAM MORRIS STEWART.

From a photograph by Bell, Washington.

dug out of the soil in the far West in almost a day attracted thousands from the East to the newly found gold fields. The Yale student was one of those who started on the long trip across the country, over the vast prairies to the treasures of the Cordilleras. The young man survived all the hardships of that perilous journey; but the experiences of those days, when no railway trains thundered over the plains, and people traveled in canvas covered wagons bearing the legend, "Pike's Peak or Bust," have left a vivid impression upon his memory.

It was in May, 1850, that he reached the end of the long trail, and found himself in San Francisco. Time was money to the young gold seeker, and without delay he provided himself with pick and shovel, and commenced mining in Nevada County. In this way he accumulated some funds, and two years later began to study law under John R. McConnell.

The legal profession had a fascination for young Stewart. He devoted himself to his Blackstone and Coke night and day. In less than a year he was appointed district attorney. Following these successes in his chosen path of life, the office of attorney general of California was offered to him. He served in this capacity till 1860, when he moved to Virginia City, where important mining interests required his attention. He held high offices in Nevada, and was elected to the United States Senate in 1864. At the expiration of his term he was again elected. His time of service expired a year before the Centennial celebration in Philadelphia. The senator at once resumed his practice of law on the Pacific coast, and was thus engaged when, in 1887, Nevada chose him again to represent her in the United States Senate as a Republican. His term extends to March 3, 1893.

In Senator Stewart's life is shown the success that attends an honorable career. His public service is a record of faithful attention to every detail and conscientious discharge of duties.

WILLIAM J. BAHMER.

TRAIN AND STATION;

OR,

THE RAMBLES OF A YOUNG RAILROADER.*

BY EDGAR R. HOADLEY, JR.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE PACIFIC EXPRESS.

SINCE the invention of the automatic air brake, the duties of the rear brakeman, or flagman, are not so arduous as to demand any special physical development, though Dash would have been well fitted to discharge them if they had. In the days when the hand brake was the only

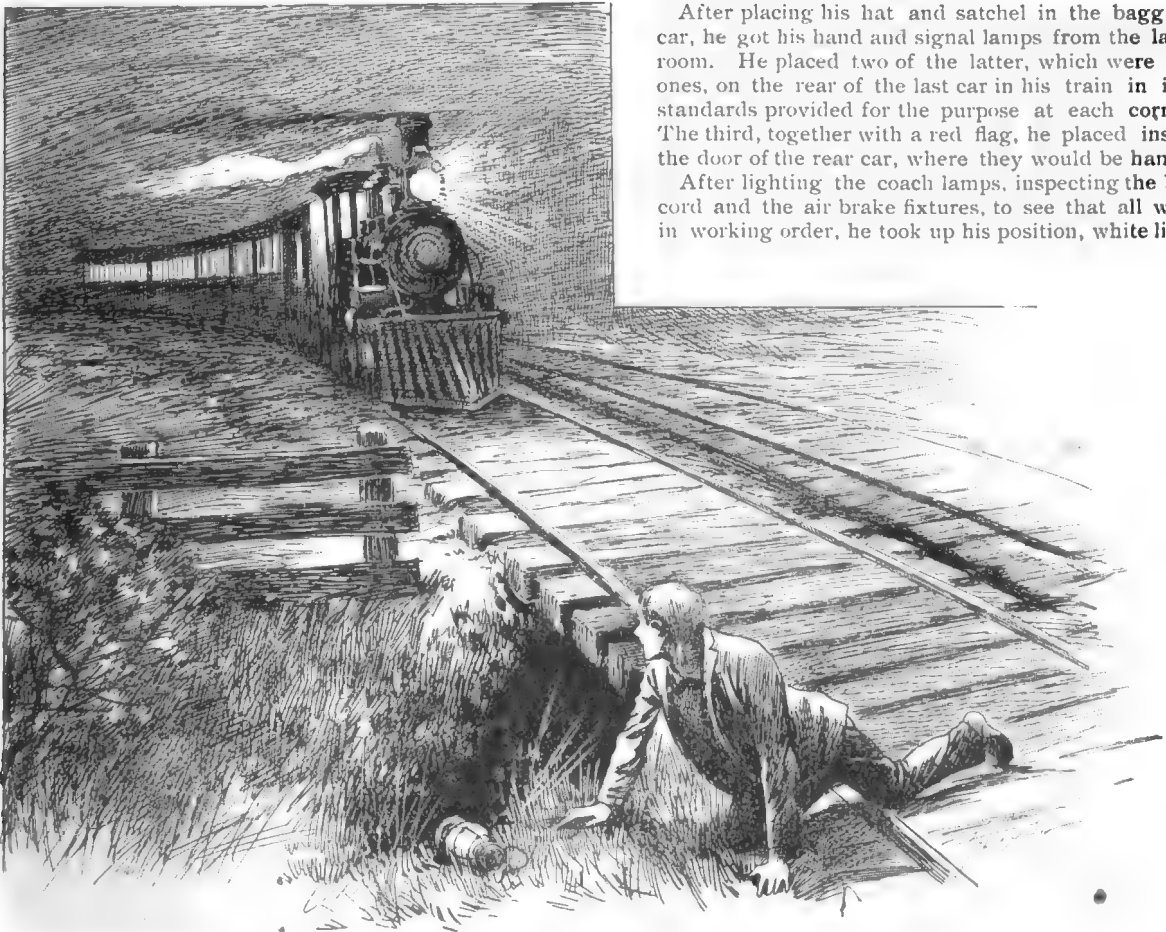
ing. The main qualifications are activity, promptitude and vigilance, and young men are generally selected to fill the positions. Their duties are not so complicated that a bright young fellow cannot become thoroughly conversant with them even in one trip.

To Dash, who had always kept his eyes open to all that was going on about him, they were familiar, and he lost no time in attending to them as soon as he arrived at the station that evening.

He had had only time to put a few necessary articles in a small hand satchel, and bid his grandparents a hasty good by. His trunk was to be forwarded to St. Louis by express. Not having the regulation uniform worn by the train employees, he simply got an extra cap from the station master's office, and was ready for business.

After placing his hat and satchel in the baggage car, he got his hand and signal lamps from the lamp room. He placed two of the latter, which were red ones, on the rear of the last car in his train in iron standards provided for the purpose at each corner. The third, together with a red flag, he placed inside the door of the rear car, where they would be handy.

After lighting the coach lamps, inspecting the bell cord and the air brake fixtures, to see that all were in working order, he took up his position, white light



DASH HAD JUST TIME TO CRAWL TO ONE SIDE WHEN THE TRAIN SHOT BY.

kind known, and the frequent stopping of a fast running passenger train required the expenditure of a vast deal of muscular strength, a previous course of training on a freight train was essential, though not absolutely necessary in all cases. Freight train men were then not so anxious to run on passenger trains as they are now, for the work was harder on the latter.

Nowadays a man from almost any other branch of the service, and frequently from the outside of it, is put to work as a passenger brakeman, with little or no preliminary train-

in hand, near his train, to assist arriving passengers and call out the necessary information to guide the traveler.

It seemed rather odd to hear his own voice crying out:

"This way for the Pacific Express. Harrisburg, Pittsburg, Columbus, Indianapolis, St. Louis, and all points West!"

But the bustle of arriving passengers and the answering of numerous questions soon caused him to forget the strangeness of his position.

Then came the signal of departure from the train starter, which was repeated by stentorian "All aboards" from the crier in the station and the conductor, after which Dash

*Begun in No. 434 of THE ARGOSY.

transmitted it to the engineer by the bell cord. The engine gave several quick, short gasps, and the long train pulled slowly out, Dash nimbly catching the rear platform as it passed him.

The last car was a sleeper, and fortunately the gentlemen's smoking room was in the rear end, so that Dash had the company of a number of passengers there for an hour or so while they waited for their berths to be made up and chatted with each other.

When they had retired he was left alone, with nothing but the noise of the rushing train and his own thoughts for company. Even though it was a novelty to him, time passed slowly enough. Had he been on other than a through express train, the frequent stopping and announcing of stations would have been a diversion, but the Pacific Express made stops few and far between, and then only at the most important points.

Though his position did not demand that he should remain at the rear of the last car during the entire trip, he was required to be somewhere near the end of the train, so that he could go back quickly with his red lamp in case of its sudden stoppage at other than its scheduled stations. This was necessary to protect his train against one which might be closely following. In addition to the red lantern, each flagman is supplied with torpedoes, which are fastened to the ball of the rail, and fuses which are lighted in thick or foggy weather. The torpedoes, according to the number put down, indicate if the track is clear, or the train is to follow with caution, while the fusee, which burns for a certain length of time, tells to the train following just how many minutes the train which left it has been gone.

Dash had not forgotten to provide himself with these necessities for signaling, though he hoped that no necessity would arise for using them.

He made several trips forward to the next car, and exchanged a few words with the next brakeman and conductor Freeman. To throw off the sleepy feeling that would come over him, but he soon found himself back at his original post at the rear end of the last sleeper. For a while he sat in the smoking room, but when that was finally turned into a sleeping apartment for the Pullman conductor, he had to sit outside on a stool in the lavatory.

Tiring of this, he stood up, looking through the glass of the door at the receding roadbed and glistening rails, which appeared like a swiftly flowing stream with bands of silver confining it, as they were revealed by the reflection of the light from the car.

This also became monotonous, but there seemed to be a fascination about it, for as often as he turned away to his seat something seemed to impel him to resume his position and watch the rails vanishing into the night.

Suddenly the lights of a station flashed by, and as he watched them with idle curiosity fast fading from sight, he saw a bright red light burst into view and swing almost into a circle several times, as if frantically waved in some one's hands. If it had been stationary he would have thought nothing about it, except to suppose it was a signal for some train following. But remembering the carelessness of the student operator in Ardley in letting a train go by which he had orders to hold, Dash quickly associated the waving of the danger signal with some such omission, though it may have been done for some other reason.

Recalling the imperative order to all train employees, "In case of doubt, always take the safe side," he promptly pulled the bell cord to stop the train. He then started forward with his red lantern to report to conductor Freeman before going back with his signal.

By the time he reached the forward end of the sleeper, the air brakes had brought the train to a standstill, and the conductor was coming out of the door of the next car.

"Did you pull that bell, Dykeman?" he asked rather sharply.

"Yes, sir," replied Dash hurriedly, starting down the steps to go back with his red light. "I saw a red light waved just after we passed the last station, and I think the operator must have had orders for us and forgot to show his signal till we had passed."

"I guess you must be mistaken, and if he didn't show his light in time it's his own fault," growled Freeman in displeased and skeptical tones; but nevertheless he followed Dash as he walked rapidly back to the station. Dash had given the signal to stop so promptly that the train was not more than a couple of hundred yards from the platform.

There was no one in sight as they approached, and Dash began to have doubts if the signal he had seen was intended for his train. Surely, if it had been, somebody would be on the watch to see if it had been observed.

"What did I tell you," began the conductor, in disgusted tones, with a shade of harshness in them. "You must have been dreaming."

Dash said nothing, for his doubts would not permit him to justify his action, and he felt slightly sheepish. He continued on toward the station, however, determined to be fully satisfied he was mistaken before acknowledging it.

"What is this?" he cried, as they both desisted, almost at the same instant, a dark body stretched out near the platform, within the circle of light from the station lamps.

Dash quickened his steps, and was soon bending over a human form. It was face downward, and in one of the hands was clutched a lantern, the globe to which was shattered to bits. Only a glance at the remains of the latter was needed to tell them that it had been a red one, which was confirmation of the young flagman's report.

He quickly turned the body over, and the upturned face of a boy, not more than fifteen years of age, was revealed. The features were as set and white as if death had set its seal upon them, and Dash at first feared that life had departed.

"Here, let's get him inside," he continued, as he set his red signal down in the middle of the track to protect their train, and placed his hands under the boy's arms.

Between them, the limp figure was borne into the small waiting room and laid on a bench. No one else was seen about the place; but this was not strange, as it was late at night, and the station was about half a mile from the small village from which it received its name.

Conductor Freeman got some water from the cooler in the waiting room, and devoted his attention to restoring the operator (for it was undoubtedly he) to consciousness, if it was a possible thing. Dash entered the small, box-like office, the door of which was wide open, and glanced over the telegraph table.

An order blank, duly filled out, directing the operator at Deckerton to hold No. 6 until No. 9 passed, and bearing the "O. K." and signature of the dispatcher, was lying there.

"Look out, Freeman!" shouted Dash, as soon as he read the order, "No. 9 is to pass you here. Get on the siding just as quick as you can, for she may be along any moment. I'll look after him."

Dash continued the work of resuscitation, while the conductor ran toward his train, signaling to back up to the siding, the switch to which he turned.

In a few moments the boy opened his eyes and stared up at Dash in bewilderment.

"Did they see it?" he whispered, and a look of wild apprehension came over his face.

"It's all right," replied Dash soothingly, "No. 6 is going in on the siding now."

In a few minutes the young operator had recovered sufficiently to explain the situation. He had been doing double duty for several days, the day operator being ill, and had not slept more than two hours in twenty four. He had neglected putting out his red signal a few minutes after receiving the order to hold No. 5, intending fully to do so, when sleep overcame him. He was aroused by No. 6 thundering by, and he grasped his lantern, rushed out on the track and whirled it about his head several times, with the forlorn hope of its being seen and understood. When he realized that the train was beyond reach, he had fallen over in a dead faint, no doubt smashing his lantern in doing so.

His signals would have indeed been futile, but for the Providence that had influenced Dash to watch so closely from the rear of his train.

"Dykeman, you were right," apologized Freeman, when he had returned to the station, after sidetracking his train and upon hearing the operator's story; "and many people on my train, perhaps myself among the number, owe their lives to you. They ought to know it and do the handsome thing for you."

"Don't say a word about it," protested Dash.

"But I *must* make a report about *him*, and it will come out, so I might as well let the passengers know what they owe to you."

"Don't do it," objected Dash again; "and I don't see why you should report this, as long as no harm is done. This young fellow is more sinned against than sinning, for it's a shame that a rich company like this should so overwork one of his age. You will do me a favor, Mr. Freeman, if you say nothing about it."

"Very well, Dykeman," responded the conductor, slowly and doubtfully, "I will do as you say, but it's taking chances to have such a handling orders. I will post the engineer to say nothing about it."

"He can be trusted in the future, never fear," returned Dash confidently.

"You're right," affirmed the operator, who was standing near, with intense emotion and tears almost in his eyes, "I will never let anything like this occur again. I owe a good deal to you, Mr. Dykeman."

As if to emphasize his last words, No. 9 flashed by with a rattle and a roar that told more forcibly than could be imagined what the dread result would have been had it met No. 6 on the main track.

There is no doubt that the young operator had had an experience he would never forget, and that his shielding from punishment for his negligence by Dash would be more far reaching in its effect than a discharge would have been.

As they returned to their train, and it was once more started, Dash told himself he had learned two things that night—that fainting, under a severe mental strain, was not confined to the "gentler sex," and that, though he is not required to do so, it is sometimes a fortunate thing for a flagman to keep a sharp lookout in the rear of his train, even when it is under way.

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE CATTLE GUARD.

THE excitement of the episode at Deckerton was sufficient to effectually drive away from Dash any inclination to drowsiness during the remainder of the night run of No. 6. And even if he had been inclined to

sleep, a most unexpected and thrilling experience, not long after the departure from Deckerton, would have made him intensely wide awake.

He had settled back in his old position on the rear sleeper, though now he was satisfied to sit on the little canvas stool in the lavatory, instead of peering through the glass of the rear door. He was thinking by what a narrow chance the passengers on No. 6, some of whom were slumbering as peacefully unconscious of danger as if in their own homes, had been saved from injury and death. And vague thoughts and speculations as to what the future had in store for him in the new field to which he was journeying passed through his brain in a disconnected way.

Suddenly he heard and felt the grinding and jarring of the brakes quickly and forcibly applied, and then the signal from the engine's whistle for the flagman.

Wondering what had caused the stoppage, but without any thought of waiting to find out, Dash promptly grasped his red lamp, pushed open the door, and swung himself down to the track. He ran rapidly back what he thought was the prescribed distance, feeling in his pocket as he went, to make sure if he had his torpedoes.

He had hardly stopped, when the engine whistled his recall, and he started back to the train. Reaching the step, he waved his lantern to go ahead, instead of signaling by the bell cord, and the train began to move.

But in mounting the step Dash missed his footing, and rolled down the embankment in a most undignified and exasperating way. And, to make matters worse, he landed in a lot of water, and was drenched from head to foot.

His lantern was extinguished by his fall, but still retaining hold of it, he regained his feet and the roadbed, and started for the moving train, which was rapidly increasing its speed. He made an extra spurt, but though he had been considered the best sprinter among his schoolfellows, the two red signals on the rear of his train drew gradually, but surely, away from him. He shouted with the hope of some one hearing him, but it was of no avail, and the two red eyes of the signal lamps seemed to wink at him in a mocking sort of way until they disappeared around a curve.

"Well, now I've got myself into a nice fix," panted Dash in disgusted tones, as he slackened his pace.

He had hardly uttered the words when he found his "nice fix" was made a much more serious matter than he had ever dreamed of. His right foot became wedged between two timbers, and he fell over on his hands and knees on the sharp edges of other woodwork; his lantern flew from his grasp over to one side out of reach, and his cap went in the other direction.

His shins were painfully bruised, and when he attempted to regain his feet, he found the right one had been shoved clear through the opening between two bars. When he tried to withdraw it he found it was held fast, and the effort gave him excruciating pain.

It did not need a lantern to tell him he had stumbled into a cattle guard, which is an arrangement at a road crossing consisting of an excavation under the rails, with timbers turned on edge across the top, to prevent live stock from wandering upon the track.

When he found he could not release his foot, a chill of fear crept over Dash, as he thought of his fate should a train come along. He glanced anxiously up and down the track, but was much relieved to see no light of an approaching engine. Then he examined his matches and fusees, with the hope that he could make a signal, but they were wet and useless.

The night was dark, but the heavens were thickly studded

with stars, which relieved the darkness to some extent. The surrounding fields, which were on a level with the track, were shrouded in gloom, and were visible for only a few yards on each side. In glancing about him Dash finally noticed a couple of shadowy figures moving along parallel to the track. For fear they would miss him, he shouted:

"Hallo, there! Come this way. I've got my foot fastened in the cattle guard."

The figures stopped, as if listening, and then came in his direction. Reaching the road crossing, they were able to see him crouched down on the cattle guard.

One of them lit a match to take in the situation.

"Hello, pard! What's the diffikilty with yer?" asked the latter.

"My all! if it ain't a brakesey," he continued to his companion, on catching a glimpse of Dash's cap on the ground.

By the light from the tiny match flame, Dash had seen enough of the pair to tell him they were undoubtedly tramps, but assistance was welcome from any source in his present situation.

"I've got my foot caught in these slats," he repeated, "and I'd like one of you to help me get it out."

"Why, cert, pard; an' mebbe you'll git us a lift over th' road," responded the one who had first spoken, as he started forward to give his assistance.

"Hold on!" interposed his companion, and a whispered conversation ensued. Dash wondered what they had to parley about before coming to his help, but he was not left long in doubt.

The spokesman, closely followed by his companion, felt his way along the side of the guard till he was near the imprisoned brakeman. Suddenly a pair of arms were thrown about Dash's shoulders and his arms were pinioned to his sides. Then his hands were drawn behind him and fastened with something at the wrists. At the same moment he felt another pair of hands going through his pockets.

He realized then that, instead of securing the hoped for assistance from the tramps, he was to be robbed by them; but he had no idea of the still further depth of their villainy. Almost bursting with indignation at such unfair treatment, he struggled desperately to frustrate their designs. But his efforts were useless, and they only caused him to wrench his imprisoned ankle so badly that the pain made him weak and faint.

He felt the removal of his pocketbook, containing all his money, and then his watch and chain, that he prized far above its intrinsic value, as the only memento he had of his mother.

"Cowards!" he gasped. "You wouldn't dare do this if I were free, even though you are two to one."

"Right ye are, brakesey; and that's the reason we're adoin' of it; see?" chuckled the fellow who no doubt suggested the robbery.

"I'll make it lively for you when I get out of this," continued Dash desperately; "and you needn't think you'll get so far away I'll not find you."

"Haw! haw! That's good, brakesey; but ye ain't agoin' to git out o' this; see?" laughed the tramp, in significant tones, as he and his companion withdrew to one side, having removed everything of any value from Dash's person.

"You'll see me just the same," said the latter boldly, more for effect than anything else.

"Well, I guess not, my chipper brakesey; not after a train passes erlong this way," mocked the speaker, as he prepared to move off.

"You aren't going to leave me in this fix, with my hands tied!" gasped Dash, with a chill of horror.

"What's the difference? Ye'll be runned over anyhow," responded the tramp heartlessly.

"Well, at least leave me as you found me," pleaded Dash; though, as the fellow had stated, it could probably make little difference, as he was as effectually secured to the track as if he had been bound there both hand and foot.

A whispered consultation followed his request, and he could hear words of earnest remonstrance coming from the least hardened of the pair. Finally, one of them came forward and cut the bonds about Dash's wrists, though it is probable it was done more for policy than any desire to please him; for if he was run over, and it was found his hands had been tied, it would be direct evidence of foul play.

"Ta! ta! brakesey; we're goin' to leave yer," were the parting words of the ringleader in the robbery, as they moved off into the darkness.

"We'll meet again, never you fear, and when you least expect it," responded Dash, determined to show a bold front to the last, without knowing how true his words would be proved.

He was once more left to himself, and for a moment his thoughts were of the loss of all his savings and his watch, and what he was to do to reach his destination without a cent of money, if he was able to get out of his present predicament. Then his sensitive and confiding nature was shocked on realizing that human beings could become sunk so low as to rob a helpless person and then leave him in immediate peril of a horrible death. This was followed by a reaction of indignation and an intense desire that the wretches should be punished.

Though he wanted the cowardly robbers to believe he was confident of release from his dangerous position, he felt no assurance that he could effect his own deliverance. Another trial, and he found his foot and ankle as immovable and fixed as ever, if, indeed, it was not wedged tighter by his struggles with the robbers.

Hark! The distant rumble of a fast moving train was borne on the still night air. "Was it on the track where he lay, or was it on a neighboring one, not far distant?" Dash asked himself.

He struggled desperately, frantically, to release his foot, but it only produced an agony of pain and caused cold drops of perspiration to stand out on his brow, with no loosening of the imprisoned member.

Completely exhausted, he sank over to one side, and his ear rested near one of the rails; but he instantly raised himself again, as if he had received an electric shock. There was the unmistakable sound of an approaching train borne in the connected steel rails?

Soon it could be heard distinctly without their aid, and finally the headlight of a locomotive burst into view.

Dash made another ineffectual effort for liberty, and then, in despair, sank over, almost fainting.

Tho noise of the rumbling train increased, and he closed his eyes in horror, as he pictured the grinding, crunching of his poor body by those ponderous wheels.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SERIOUS PREDICAMENT.

FOR an instant Dash lay as if paralyzed by the nearness and certainty of his impending fate. Then, as if by magic, the light of renewed hope shot into his brain, inspired by a means of release that had just occurred to him.

It surprised him that he had not thought of it before. He raised himself to a sitting position, and then bent forward,

with each one of his hands thrust through the spaces between the bars. He hurriedly began fingering the laces of his shoe, for he was almost sure, that with that covering off, he could withdraw his imprisoned foot.

Whether it was from the nervous excitement or the perverseness that sometimes seems to possess inanimate things in time of suspense, he could not find the ends of the laces for many valuable seconds. And when he did grasp them and gave them a pull, the slip knot, in which they were tied, failed. The strands were drawn into a hard knot, which he could not hope to unravel before the fast approaching train would be upon him.

Dash glanced apprehensively toward the gleaming headlight, the rays of which had almost reached him now. It seemed to grow larger, even as he watched it, and to glare in a horribly pitiless manner.

It is truly remarkable with what incredible rapidity the thoughts will travel when a person is in deadly peril. Even as he glanced toward the approaching train, Dash's brain passed in review all his young life, not omitting even some trifling incidents he had entirely forgotten.

With an effort he threw off the stupor that seemed to be coming over him. Suddenly he thought of his knife to sever the laces of his shoe; but, even as he reached down in his pocket for it, he felt sure he would not find it, as the tramps had very likely taken it. When his fingers closed over the coveted blade, therefore, he even felt grateful to the heartless marauders, and a glow of returning hope suffused his veins.

With a calmness that he often wondered at afterward, Dash opened the large blade of the knife, and, reaching down, slashed along the instep of his shoe with a vigor that not only severed the laces, but penetrated the flesh as well. In the excitement he did not even notice the wounds he had inflicted, and quickly wrenched off his foot covering.

Just as he did so, the engine of the rapidly nearing train gave two long and two short blasts of the whistle for the crossing.

With a mighty pull, Dash forced his foot through the bars, leaving his sock, and much of the skin from his ankle, in the operation. Weak and exhausted from pain and his exertion, he had just time to crawl and half roll to one side of the track, when the train shot by with a rattling roar and a rush of air that seemed almost strong enough to draw him under the whirling wheels by its suction.

A whirling cyclone followed in its wake, but the red signal lights on the rear car soon grew smaller, twinkled, then disappeared, and the noise of the fast moving cars died away in the distance.

Dash remained perfectly still for a few minutes to recover from the severe strain he had been under, and, as he did so, he sent up a fervent prayer of thanksgiving for his deliverance. Then he made an examination of his foot and ankle, as far as possible, in the darkness, and raised himself upright to test if they were still in a condition to perform their duty. Though they were considerably bruised and swollen, and the skin torn away clear to his ankle bones, he found he could walk tolerably well.

The next thing to do was to decide where he was to go, for he did not want to spend the night out of doors, especially in his weak and bruised condition. Judging from the time that had elapsed between leaving Deckerton and when his train stopped and called for the flagman, he calculated he could not be more than four or five miles from that place. He knew that the next station beyond was fifteen miles from Deckerton, and therefore he was nearer the latter point.

He replaced his damaged shoe and looked around for his

cap but it could not be found. The tramps had no doubt carried it off for some reason. He found the remains of his lantern, which had been jerked from his grasp when he stumbled into the cattle guard; and, taking it with him, he started along the middle of the track in the opposite direction to that which he had been going when trying to catch the train.

He was obliged to limp considerably, and his progress was necessarily slow. Several trains passed him, going in the opposite direction, and another one overtook him in the first half hour that he struggled along.

He would have signaled one of them to stop had he had the means to light his lantern, even though now it had no globe. As it was, he shouted wildly to one and waved his lantern about his head, but it was of no avail.

He resumed his tramp with many misgivings, for his foot now began to pain him more, and the ankle joint felt stiff and sore.

"If this is a specimen of some of a flagman's experiences," he thought, "I'm glad I am not permanently in the business; but I expect I've got more than usually falls to their lot this trip."

It did indeed seem that his exciting and trying adventures were following one another fast since he embarked on a railroad career, and especially since his departure as a flagman on the Pacific Express.

"But I suppose I'll be glad to get anything to do after this," he continued reflectively, as he thought of his penniless condition. "And I'd just like to get my hands on those cowardly tramps."

With many a suppressed groan of pain he continued to limp forward, on what seemed to him an endless journey. Another half hour had passed, when he stopped for a rest, and noticed a dark object lying close up to the end of the ties. He at first thought it was really a new tie that had been deposited there for repairs to the road. But a nearer inspection revealed that it was a man, and a drunken one at that, judging from the fumes of liquor that arose from his person.

"Poor fellow!" was Dash's mental exclamation, with a feeling of pity and disgust. "A foot nearer, and he would be under the wheels. What will I do with him?"

He shook the fellow vigorously, but it produced no sign of consciousness.

"Well, if he can't walk, I can't carry him, that's certain," muttered Dash; "and all I can do is to roll him a little further from danger."

He proceeded to do so; and then, thinking the fellow might have some matches, with which he could light his lamp, he examined the pockets in the unconscious man's vest. He found some, done up in a piece of paper, and scratching one of them on the sole of his shoe, he prepared to apply it to the wick of the lantern. As the flame flared up, he glanced toward the prostrate man.

He instantly recognized him as the ringleader of the tramps who had robbed him, and was so astonished that he let the match burn out without using it.

"Well, if this doesn't beat me!" exclaimed Dash. "I wonder how he got in this beastly shape so quick, and where his companion is. Maybe he's got some of my property. I'm in luck if he has."

Feeling justified in doing so, under the circumstances, Dash proceeded to examine the rest of the helpless one's pockets. His search was rewarded by bringing forth the chain and locket charm belonging to his watch, and some money in silver and bills. Though he was morally certain the latter was his, he returned it to the man's pocket, and

took only the locket and chain. The watch had doubtless been given to his confederate, as his portion of the booty. But Dash considered himself peculiarly fortunate in regaining the locket, because he valued it above the others on account of the pictures it contained.

Dash again prepared to light his signal lantern, fully determined to stop the first train going toward Deckerton, and have the drunken tramp taken there, where he would be punished and a portion of his money returned to him.

As he struck the match, Dash still held the watch chain in his hand, but before he could ignite the signal he was doomed to another interruption of the most startling and unexpected kind. A strong grasp was laid hold of his collar, and he was roughly dragged over on his back.

(To be continued.)

DIGGING FOR GOLD.

A STORY OF CALIFORNIA.*

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GRANT HAS AN ADVENTURE.

"SHALL we take supper at the hotel?" asked Grant. "How much do they charge?"

"Two dollars a day for meals and lodging?"

"Isn't that considerable?" asked Grant, rather dismayed.

"Yes, if one only earns fifty cents," answered Tom, smiling.

"Do you like sleeping in such a crowd, Tom?"

"No, but there seems no other way unless I bought a cabin, and I should feel too lonely."

"But now there are two of us together. Why can't we hire a cabin, and lodge and eat independently. We can take turns in doing the cooking, and it will be a good deal cheaper."

"Do you know anything about cooking, Grant? I don't."

"Yes; I took some lessons at the restaurant. I can teach you all I know myself."

"Then we can establish ourselves tomorrow. There is a deserted cabin a little way up the gulch, which no one seems to care to occupy. It is in fair condition, and the last occupant kept house, so that there are dishes and cooking utensils. We can take possession, and, then, if any one disputes our right, we can agree to pay rent."

"That will be capital," said Grant in a tone of satisfaction.

For a month Grant and Tom Cooper worked assiduously, sometimes at one claim, sometimes at the other. The life of a miner is full of excitement. Even when he meets with poor luck, there is the prospect every day of making a rich find. But in the case of the two friends it was always hope deferred. At the end of the month they sat down to consider the situation.

"Well, Grant, we don't seem to get much richer," said Tom, taking a whiff from a clay pipe which was his evening luxury after a hard day's work.

"We made fifty cents yesterday," responded Grant soberly.

"Between us. That is twenty five cents each."

"On the whole we have been losing ground during the last month. I am twenty dollars poorer than when I came here."

"And I have fallen behind as much, or more than that."

"Digging for gold isn't what I thought it to be," said Grant. "I was doing a good deal better in Sacramento."

"That may be, but we mustn't forget that a man does strike luck once in a while."

"It won't do us any good to have some other man strike luck."

"I see you are getting down hearted, Grant."

"Well, not exactly; but I think I've made a mistake. Neither of our claims amounts to much."

"What do you propose, then?"

"I have nothing to propose," said Grant modestly. "You are older and more experienced than I. I will follow your plan."

"Then let us work three days longer. If at the end of that time

nothing turns up, we will pull up stakes and go elsewhere. We can't afford to keep on working and falling behind all the time."

"Three days then, Tom."

"You haven't had any luck yet, Grant. I had a share before you came."

"I am afraid my coming brought you bad luck."

"Bad luck or not, I am glad to have you here. After a hard day's work it seems pleasant to have some one to talk to."

"If I should leave you, how would Silverthorn do?" asked Grant smiling.

"Poor company is worse than none. I'd rather hustle by myself than have that man round."

The next morning the two partners went to work as usual. They always started hopeful of good results, but, as the day wore away and results were meager, their hopes began to sink. That day they cleared between them a dollar and a half, while their expenses, at a modest calculation, so high were provisions, were nearly double this sum.

"Another day lost!" commented Tom as they sat over their evening fire, for it was beginning to grow cold at the close of the day.

"We won't say anything about it," said Grant. "Let the three days pass, and then we will consult."

About the middle of the next afternoon Grant was attacked by a violent headache.

"I shall have to close up work for the day, Tom," he said.

"Go to the cabin and lie down," suggested Tom.

"I would rather go on a walk. The fresh air may do me good."

Grant dipped his handkerchief in the stream, bathed his forehead, and then set out on a stroll to the south of the claims. Finding relief, he pushed on till he had probably walked a couple of miles.

It was a lonely stretch of country, and, with the exception of a boy, he met no one. His surprise was the greater, therefore, when at one point he heard a groan, evidently proceeding from some one in pain. He looked about him, and finally discovered an old man lying under a tree doubled up with pain. It was hard to tell his age, for his appearance was neglected, and he had the air of one who lived apart from his fellow men.

"What is the matter?" asked Grant in a tone of sympathy. "Can I help you?"

"I am suffering from an attack of rheumatism," answered the old man. "It came upon me suddenly, and has disabled me, as you see."

"What can I do for you?"

"If you can help me to my cabin it will be a great service."

"Where is your cabin?"

"In the edge of yonder woods."

He pointed feebly, and Grant, following the direction, espied a small hut, brown and discolored with age, standing under the shadow of a rock about a quarter of a mile away.

He helped the old man to his feet, and half supported him as he walked toward the cabin.

"Are you often seized in this way?" he asked.

"Not often so suddenly and violently, though I have been in the grip of my enemy for years."

CHAPTER XXV.

ANOTHER LONELY CABIN.

THEY reached the cabin at last, and then a question which Grant was about to ask was answered. The old man lived alone.

The furniture was of the simplest: a bed, a couple of chairs, a table, and a few dishes.

"Is there no one to take care of you?" asked Grant.

"No, I need no one," was the quick reply. "I have remedies that will soon quiet the pain."

"I should think you would feel lonely."

"I prefer solitude to the society of mean, selfish and designing men," answered the old man bitterly.

"All men are not mean or selfish."

"No doubt you are right, but those whom I trusted most have proved so."

"How long have you lived here?"

"Six years."

"Are you—poor? If so, perhaps I can help you."

"No, no, poverty is the smallest of my troubles. Look there!" and the old man drew from his pocket a handful of gold pieces. "I have enough to see me through the few years I have yet to live."

*Begun in No. 430 of THE ARGOSY

"But you have no occupation—no way to fill up your time?"

"I have a few books and my own thoughts. I will tell you what little is to be told. I came here six years ago, and for a time devoted myself to gold digging. I was fortunate, and secured all I needed for my modest wants. Then I stopped, for I had no object in accumulating more. But you tell me about yourself. You are young to be in California."

"Yes, I came to seek my fortune. I was a poor boy, and my mother is unhappily situated. I came to see if I could not improve her lot and my own."

"What are you doing?"

"I am digging for gold?"

"Where?"

"At Howe's Gulch?"

"Have you succeeded?"

"So poorly that I am thinking of giving it up and going elsewhere. In Sacramento I worked in a restaurant, and made a good deal more money than I have made at the mines. I am twenty dollars poorer than when I came here."

"Are you alone?"

"No, I have a friend with me—a young man whose acquaintance I made in crossing the plains."

"Is he a true friend—a loyal friend?"

"Yes."

"Then there are such in the world. Those I have met have been of a different kind. Has he been any more fortunate than yourself?"

"Not since I arrived. He did something before I came, but I must have brought him bad luck, for he has been running behind ever since. We have not been making expenses for the last month."

"I never thought much of Howe's Gulch, though some have been fortunate there."

"Then it was not there that you found your gold?"

"No."

Grant wanted to ask the old man where it was that his claim was located, but hesitated, not knowing how the question would be received.

"I can direct you to a rich spot," said the old man after a pause. "I had intended to let the secret die with me, but you have done me a service—"

"A very slight one," said Grant modestly.

"Not slight, for without your help I should have been unable to get home."

"I was glad to serve you, and do not need compensation. You may wish to work the claim yourself."

"No; my days of labor are over. I am sixty five, and might easily be taken for ten years older. I shall be glad to contribute to your happiness and success, and that of your friend."

"Perhaps some one may have discovered and worked the claim."

"No; it is an out of the way place, and has not attracted attention."

"How, then, did you discover it?"

"By accident. As to the richness, let this convince you: In less than six months I took out ten thousand dollars, and having no need of more, stopped working, and carefully removed all traces likely to betray the mine's entrance to a casual observer."

"It will be a great favor to Tom and myself. We ought to give you a share of the proceeds."

The old man shook his head.

"I shall not live long enough to spend the money I have," he answered. "You are welcome to all it will yield you. Come here with your friend tomorrow morning, and I will give you the directions that will enable you to find the claim."

"Can I do anything more for you before I go?"

"Yes; you may go to the stream behind the cabin and bring me some fresh water."

Grant did as requested, and, elated by his unexpected good luck, started on his return to Howe's Gulch.

When Grant reached the cabin jointly occupied by himself and Tom Cooper, he found Tom sitting outside, smoking his pipe.

He looked very thoughtful.

"Have you got rid of your headache, Grant?" he asked

"Yes; I feel as lively as a cricket."

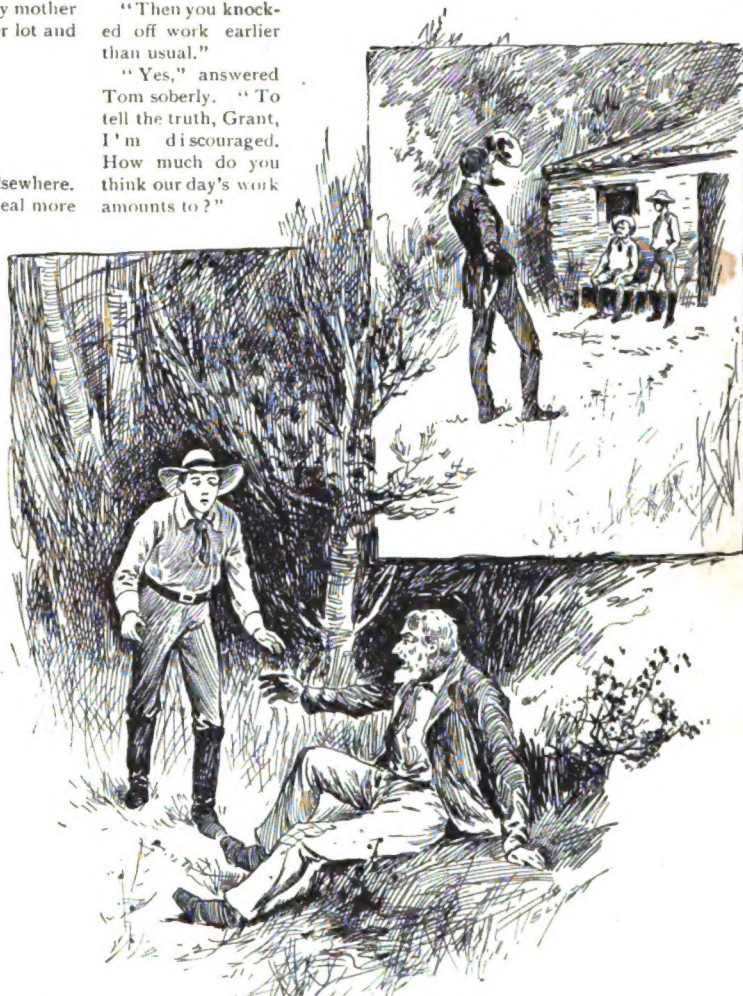
"Then your walk has done you good?"

"A great deal of good," answered Grant; but Tom did not detect the significance hidden in the reply. "How long have you been at home?"

"An hour."

"Then you knocked off work earlier than usual."

"Yes," answered Tom soberly. "To tell the truth, Grant, I'm discouraged. How much do you think our day's work amounts to?"



"WHAT'S THE MATTER?" CRIED GRANT. "CAN I HELP YOU?"

"Yours and mine?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"A dollar and seventy five cents! I think, Grant, we had better inquire the location of the nearest poorhouse. We may want to ask admission."

"There's an old saying, Tom: 'The darkest hour is just before day.'"

"How does that apply here?"

"I will tell you. I have secured a claim from which ten thousand dollars was obtained within six months."

"And then it petered out?"

"No; the owner stopped working it because he had money enough, and was satisfied."

"Hasn't it been worked since?"

"No."

"How much did you agree to pay for it?" asked Tom in excitement.

"Nothing. It was given me for a service I rendered the owner."

"This seems like a fairy tale, Grant. What does it mean?"

"I will tell you;" and Grant related his afternoon's adventure.

"Hurrah! we're in luck!" exclaimed Tom, rising to his feet and swinging his hat in excitement. "If what you say is true, we're made men."

"I am glad you look upon me as a man," said Grant, smiling.

"I'm only anticipating a little. I hope," he added anxiously, "the old man won't reconsider the matter."

"Not much chance of it. I haven't known him long, but I am quite sure that he isn't that kind of a man."

CHAPTER XXVI.

NAHUM STOCKTON.

"WHAT shall we do with our old claims?"

Before Grant could answer that question a step was heard, and looking up, the two friends saw approaching a tall, gaunt man of thirty five—a typical Yankee—whose shabby attire indicated that he was "down on his luck."

"Good evenin', friends," he said.

"Good evening," responded Tom cordially. "Sit down with us, won't you? I've got an extra pipe, if you would like a smoke."

"Thank you; I'm just pinin' for a smoke. Is this your tenement?"

"Well, we found it vacant, and squatted here. The owner hasn't called on us for any rent yet."

"You're in luck."

"Have you just arrived?"

"Yes, I have. I'm a rollin' stone, and I haven't gathered any moss."

"There's a good many in that fix."

"Do you see that coin?" and the stranger took from his pocket a silver quarter and flipped it up in the air.

"Yes. Is there anything strange about it?"

"Well, there's this—it's the last and only piece of property now belonging to Nahum Stockton. If you are acquainted with the tax collector, don't mention it, for I wouldn't like to be assessed on it."

"I will respect your wishes, Mr. Stockton," said Tom, laughing. "May I ask what are your plans?"

"If I can buy a claim for a quarter, I will settle down here and dig for gold."

Tom looked at Grant, and Grant nodded, for he read his friend's thought.

"Having so much money," said Tom soberly, "you'd better buy a couple of claims."

"That's a good joke," returned Stockton with a grim smile.

"No joke at all! My friend and I own a couple of claims, and we leave Howe's Gulch tomorrow. We will make them over to you without money and without price. As to a cradle, you can buy one on installments."

"Do you mean it?" asked Stockton eagerly.

"Yes; but I don't want to deceive you in the matter. They haven't been paying very well lately, and Grant and I are going elsewhere to prospect."

"If they are paying anything, I'll accept them with pleasure."

"They are paying something, and of course there's a possibility of striking it rich in either one of them."

"Gentlemen," said Stockton earnestly, "you don't know what you've done for me. I was at the end of my resources, and felt kind o' reckless. You've made a new man of me."

"We are glad to do you a service. Grant, can't you get us some supper? After eatin', we'll go and show Mr. Stockton the claims, for we shall want to make an early start tomorrow morning. Mr. Stockton, our supper will be a plain one, but we shall be glad to have you join us in eating it."

"You can't be gladder than I am," said Nahum quaintly. "I haven't had anything to eat since mornin', and then it was only a slice of bread and a glass of milk and water with the milk left out."

Grant was in the cabin, making ready the evening meal. There was bread and butter, some cold meat, and a cup of tea for each. Mr. Stockton ate as if he enjoyed every mouthful.

"You don't ask me how I lost my money," he said.

"You lost it, then; you didn't spend it?"

"No; if I had got the worth of it I wouldn't have cared so much, but to be cheated out of it by a mean scoundrel was a little too much."

"Were you cheated out of it?"

"Yes. I'll tell you how. Coming from Frisco I struck Froel's Bar with a hundred dollars in my pocket. A hundred dollars! Sometimes I wonder if there is so much money in the world, now that I am dead broke! Well, I had been meaning to buy a claim, and was walkin' 'round when I met a sleek appearin' man, who looked as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He asked me what my plans were, and I told him I wanted to buy a claim. 'You're the very man I'm lookin' after,' he said. 'I've got a rich claim here, but my health has given way, and I haven't strength to work it. I'm willin' to sell for half price.'

"Well, I looked at the claim, and I liked the appearance of it. The artful rascal found out how much money I had, and asked me a hundred dollars for the claim. 'But,' said I, 'that won't leave me anything to work it with.' 'I like you, Mr. Stockton,' he said, as he grabbed my hand, and the tears came into his eyes. 'I feel like bein' a true friend to you. I'll let you have it for ninety dollars, and that ain't half what it's worth.'

"Well, to make a long story short, I paid over the ninety dollars, and he wrote out a paper making over the claim to me. Then he shook hands with me and went away. I haven't seen him since."

"Wasn't the claim a good one?" asked Grant.

"Yes, the best at the Bar."

"Then I don't see what you have to complain of."

"I'll tell you. The next mornin' I went 'round to take possession of my claim, when I saw a stout, good looking man workin' it. 'Hold on, my friend,' I said, 'what are you doin' with my claim?'

"'Your claim!' repeated Charles Ambrose, for that was his name. 'What are you talkin' about?'

"'I reckon I speak plain enough,' said I, provoked. 'I bought that claim last night, and I mean to hold it.'

"'Oh, you bought it?' said Ambrose. 'Of whom did you buy it?'

"On that I produced the paper."

"'Here's the document,' I said. 'It is signed by Dionysius Silverthorn.'"

"What I" ejaculated Tom and Grant jointly.

"Do you know the man?" asked Stockton.

"I think we do," answered Tom Cooper. "He's a tall, thin fellow, with a lamb-like expression, but he's an experienced swindler."

"You've about hit it. Did he swindle you?"

"No, but he tried to. Well, how did you come out?"

"At the little end of the horn. Silverthorn was off with my money and I had nothing to show for it. I'd just like to get hold of him. He wouldn't look quite so much like an innocent lamb when I got through with him."

"I left him at Sacramento," said Grant.

"I'll hunt him up when I get a little money," went on Stockton. "I've met scoundrels before, but he'll take the cake."

"Or anything else he can lay hands on," said Grant with a laugh.

They walked over to the mining camp, put Stockton into possession of the claims, and introduced him to a miner who agreed to sell him a cradle on installments.

"Now, Grant," said Tom, "we'll go to bed, for we may have a long walk before us tomorrow."

(To be continued.)

BAD FOR THE BONE.

"By Jove!" said the museum man, turning pale.

"What's the matter, Rupert?" asked his wife.

"I forgot to send the dog-faced boy any supper, and he is locked up in the same cage with the ossified man."—*New York Sun*.

THE FESTIVE SHAD.

BOARDER—"Have you any boneless shad, madam?"

LANDLADY—"No, sir."

BOARDER—"Very well, madam; I don't care for any more of the shadless bone."—*Washington Star*.

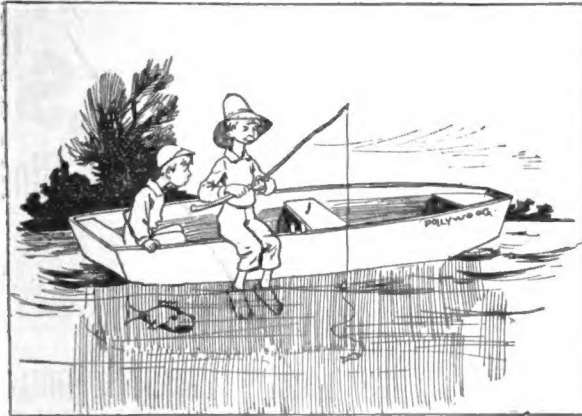
EASY TO OBEY.

"I CAN command my salary," said the Thespian in reply to the remarks of an envious rival.

"No doubt," was the reply. "It's so small it would be afraid to disobey you."—*Washington Post*.

THE ARGOSY

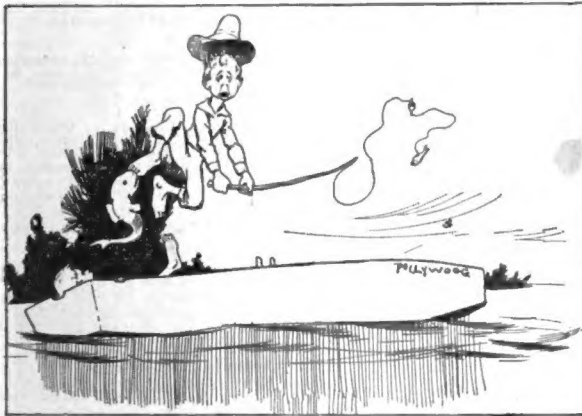
THE CRUELTY OF LIVE BAIT FISHING.



I.

JIMMY—"Johnnie, it's wicked to let the big fish bite the little ones like that, while they're alive."

JOHNNY—"Rats, Jimmy; it don't hurt to be bit by a fish."



II.

JOHNNY (as a large fish mistakes his toe for a minnow, and gives him a practical illustration of the question at issue)—"Owch! Help!! The sharks!!!"

APPROPRIATELY NAMED.

A NEW remedy for bruised ball players has been found to take the place of arnica. It is called base balsam.—*Washington Star*.

ANOTHER SLAP AT THE WEATHER BUREAU.

A FLOCK of wild geese sailing up through Ohio toward the North a few days ago is said to have been turned back by a government cold wave emblem flying from a tall flagpole. The creatures seemed to accept the display of the flag as a warning that severe weather was coming, which was pardonable in them, considering that they were geese.—*Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*.

THE PRODIGAL FAMILY.

PRODIGAL SON—"I come to you with a heavy heart."

PRODIGAL FATHER—"And a light pocketbook. I know all about that. How much do you need now?"—*Texas Siftings*.

A TRAITOR.

MR. GILTMAN—"What have you done with my wife's pet poodle that I paid you \$20 to steal?"

SNEAK THIEF BILL—"I returned it this morning and got the \$50 reward she offered for it."—*St. Joseph News*.

HOW TO LIVE.

GENIUS is fond of Bohemia.

At a recent convivial gathering where Want and Worth sat side by side, the question was raised: "Is it worth while to live for posterity?"

The usual leaven of enthusiasts, whose motto has always been, under any circumstances, "Art for art's sake," insisted that "no other course is consistent with artistic honor."

"Working for immediate returns is a debasing idea."

However, there were those present with the courage of another conviction—they believed in butter for their bread.

"Art," they said, "that does not fill hungry mouths and clothe delicate bodies is a dismal failure."

"It is well enough to have one's virtues carved upon a monument, but what comfort is that to a needy widow and starving children?"

True art and worldly prosperity can go hand in hand. A physical basis is the prime necessity—a flexible mental condition that can adjust itself to practical surroundings; that can leave the gigantic canvas long enough to make an alma mater title page for a man who will pay for it.

Health, briefly, is the secret of success—good digestion—sound nerves.

Have you lost it? Get it back; you can.

Drs. Starkey & Palen's Compound Oxygen Treatment will help you here.

If your profession is of such a character that but a limited amount of recreation is possible, if you must be at it early and late—then some means of assimilation along with your activity must be found.

Drs. Starkey & Palen's Compound Oxygen Treatment is this means.

It is blood food that is in condition for immediate assimilation, since the chemical changes necessary for assimilation have already taken place.

An inhalation of this treatment sends a warm, rich glow over the system, and every function awakens to renewed activity.

A book of 200 pages, containing the names and addresses of men and women cured of desperate diseases by the use of Drs. Starkey & Palen's Compound Oxygen Treatment, will be sent entirely free of charge to any address.

If you want the book, write to Drs. Starkey & Palen, No. 1529 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa., 120 Sutter St., San Francisco, Cal., 66 Church St., Toronto, Canada.

The book is filled with such endorsements as the following:

"DRS. STARKEY & PALEN, No. 1529 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

"I have never had a symptom of catarrh in the head since using the Compound Oxygen Treatment.

"FRANCES HARLEY.

"PENDLETON, KY., Oct. 3, 1889."

"DRS. STARKEY & PALEN, No. 1529 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

"I find that your Compound Oxygen Treatment has been of great benefit to me.

"My catarrhal troubles are much relieved.

"E. A. GLADWIN.

"MIDDLETOWN, CONN., Oct. 22, 1889."

"DRS. STARKEY & PALEN, No. 1529 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

"Your Compound Oxygen Treatment is the only thing that has ever done my catarrh any good.

JULIA LEONARD.

"DECORAH, IOWA."

"DRS. STARKEY & PALEN, No. 1529 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

"I used your Compound Oxygen Treatment two years ago for catarrh, with decided benefit.

"JOHN A. HART.

"MARYVILLE, BLOUNT CO., TENN., Aug. 5, 1889."

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SERVED HIM RIGHT.

HE talked the old man dumb and blind, Then muchly to his grief The old man said—"twas most unkind—" "Go on, I'm not yet deaf."—*The Epoch.*

WHAT MAKES BALLS SO POPULAR.

FIRST GUEST (at grand ball)—"Hark, isn't that the champagne popping in the supper room?" SECOND GUEST—"No; I guess it's the young couples in the conservatory."—*N. Y. Weekly.*

BROKE UP THE LAWYER.

"Do you know the value of an oath?" asked the judge of an old darkey who was to be the next witness. "Yes, sah, I does. One ob dese yeah lawyers done gib me foah dollars for to swear to suffin. Dat's de value of an oath. Foah dollars, sah." And then there was consternation in the court room.—*St. Joseph News.*

FITS.

ALL Fits stopped free by Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. No fits after first day's use. Marvellous cures. Treatise and \$2.00, trial bottle free to Fit cases. Send to Dr. Kline, 931 Arch St., Phila, Pa.

COULDN'T FORETELL EVERYTHING.

ANXIOUS CALLER—"Is this the police station?" CHIEF—"Yes, ma'am. What can I do for you?" A. C.—"I have lost some valuable jewelry. I suspect some former servant of having taken it. I want to employ a detective to find her whereabouts." C.—"All right, ma'am. Your name?" A. C.—"I am Mmie. de-Wiss, the—er—fortune teller."—*Chicago Tribune.*

LUCKY TO HAVE A FRIEND.

CONDUCTOR (on Western railway)—"Here! You can't carry a skeleton in a passenger coach! Put it in a box, you stingy heathen, and have it checked as baggage." PASSENGER—"He hain't no skeleton pardner; he's a friend of mine who went to Oklahoma to make his fortune. He's—"

SKELETON (feebly)—"Slightly disfigured, but still in the ring, thank ye."—*Munsey's Weekly.*

SHE KNEW WHAT TO DO.

"CLARA," said Nellie, dropping the fashion paper she was reading, "what would you do if you had a mustache on your lip?" "After he took it away I should tell him that I preferred to be married in June."—*Boston Herald.*

CANARY BIRDS

that have ceased to chirp either from illness, exposure or on account of moulting, can be made to warble tuneful melodies by placing a cake of BIRD MANNA in their cages. It acts almost like a charm in restoring them to song. It is an absolute necessity to the health, comfort and hygiene of CAGE BIRDS. It is made after the Andreasberg recipe. Sold by druggists, grocers and bird dealers. Mailed to any P. O. in the U. S. or Canada for 15 cts. by the BIRD FOOD CO., 400 N. 3d St., Philadelphia, Pa. Bird Book free. In reply to this adv. mention *The Argosy*.

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